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Moscow to curb arms sales to Iran

WASHINGTON (AP) — Strengthening a summit agreement, the Clinton administration has persuaded Russia to halt its delivery of air-to-ground missiles to Iran and to wind up ongoing weapons contracts quickly. The assurances were given last month in Moscow at a meeting of delegations headed by Vice President Al Gore and Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin but only now disclosed by U.S. officials. Russia's decision to stop providing missiles to Iran was a pleasant surprise for the U.S. side, a senior official said, speaking on condition of anonymity. It complies with Secretary of State Warren Christopher's "dual containment" policy — to try to block weapons sales to Iran and Iraq. Russia was engaged in a lucrative weapons arrangement with Iran before President Boris Yeltsin agreed in a summit here last September with President Clinton to forego any new arms contracts with Iran. That still left Russia with ongoing contracts, and it has taken nine months of discussions to whittle away at the situation. The incentive for Moscow was U.S. support for access to more advanced Western technology.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation
جوردان تايمز يومية سياسية تصدر بالانجليزية عن المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية. الراي.

U.S. protests France-Iran oil deal

WASHINGTON (R) — The United States said on Friday it was disappointed over an agreement by a French oil group to develop Iranian oil fields, and called on the Paris government not to extend official credits to Tehran. State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns said the U.S. government had protested to France over the deal signed on Thursday by Total with the National Iranian Oil company to develop two fields in the Gulf (see page 12). "We are certainly disappointed," Mr. Burns told a news briefing. "Deals of the Total type send the wrong signal to the Iranian leadership at the wrong time. We would like to call upon the French government ... not to extend official credits or other financial benefits to Iran." We don't think it's in France's interest to idly stand by for the sake of short-term profit. Mr. Burns added that the United States had a "very deep disagreement" with France on the issue.

Yemeni president ends visit, pays tribute to Jordan's stands, support

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh ended his visit to Jordan on Friday after a highly successful mission that helped consolidate and expand bilateral relations between Yemen and Jordan and boost efforts to restore Arab solidarity.

President Saleh, who was paying his first visit to Jordan after crushing southern Yemeni separatists who challenged the unity of Yemen last year and a successful visit to Saudi Arabia last month to heal a rift between Riyadh and Sanaa, left for Egypt to continue an Arab tour that he began in Qatar on Tuesday.

In a cable he sent to His Majesty King Hussein after his departure, President Saleh thanked the King for the "warm feelings and hospitality" accorded to him and the high-level delegation accompanying him, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

In an implicit reference to the role Jordan played in maintaining the unity of Yemen, President Saleh said: "The people of Yemen will never forget your noble pan-Arab positions and your support for Yemeni unity during the most difficult and delicate time."

Arab solidarity and unity were the centerpiece of attention at a press conference President Saleh and King Hussein held Thursday evening after a round of talks.

The King said Jordan was committed to seeking unity, integration and cooperation among Arabs and expressed confidence that the unity of Yemen would be preserved.

President Saleh said he was not mediating between Jordan and Saudi Arabia and that there was no need for any mediation because contacts were continuing between Amman and Riyadh.

He said King Fahd of Saudi Arabia initiated a discussion on Jordan during a meeting of the two leaders had in Riyadh last month and expressed his desire to improve ties with Jordan. Mr. Saleh said he briefed King Hussein on the meeting with the Saudi leader.

The Yemeni leader said direct dialogue between the parties concerned was the best means to overcome what he described as artificial barriers.

At the press conference, the King announced that Foreign Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti would visit Saudi Arabia today (Saturday) (see separate story).

The King held a round of closed-door talks with President Saleh shortly after the Yemeni leader's arrival here from Syria. They were later joined by senior leaders from both sides.

Reports said the King reaffirmed his commitment to supporting all agreements reached between Yemen and Jordan, particularly those agreed upon during a meeting last month of the joint higher committee chaired by the prime ministers of the two countries. He also underlined the need to quickly implement what has been agreed upon.

Petra said King Hussein and President Saleh reviewed current Arab affairs and recent developments and underlined the need to restore Arab solidarity on a firm basis and on a concept.

The talks were attended on the Jordanian side by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker, His Royal Highness Prince Tal Ben Mohammed, Lower House Speaker Sa'd Hayel Al Sour, the two deputy prime ministers, the foreign minister and the ministers of supply, labour and state and the Jordanian ambassador to Yemen, Fayez Rabbih.

The Yemeni side included Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Abdul Karim Iryani, Information Minister Mohammad Bassandwa, presidential advisor Mohsen Sallami, Abdul Wahab Mahmoud, deputy speaker of



His Majesty King Hussein on Friday sees off Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh upon the two-day visit (photo by Yousef Allan)

Kabariti visits S. Arabia today in bid to better ties

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Foreign Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti heads for Saudi Arabia today in first official visit by a Jordanian minister to Saudi Arabia after Amman-Riyadh relations were strained in the wake of the 1990-91 Gulf crisis.

His Majesty King Hussein, in a joint press conference with visiting Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh on Thursday, confirmed the visit, which comes in response to an official invitation by the Saudi foreign minister, Prince Saud Al Faisal.

"We hope the results of this trip will be positive and good," the King said. "We are confident that it will be so."

"God willing, it will be another step to build relations on a solid and lasting basis, this is what we hope for what we work for," the King added.

Reports from Saudi Arabia said Prince Faisal had sent an official invitation to Mr. Kabariti as part of what was described as a new policy by the Saudi leadership to heal the rifts caused by the Gulf crisis.

President Saleh of Yemen visited Saudi Arabia last month and Sudan's foreign minister, Ali Osman Mohammad Taha, was in Riyadh this month. Jordan, Yemen and Sudan were among the Arab countries that Saudi Arabia perceived as supporting Iraq following its invasion of Kuwait.

The French news agency, Agence France Presse, quoted Hani Khalifeh, the Jordanian ambassador in Saudi Arabia, as saying that Mr. Kabariti's talks with Prince Faisal would focus on bilateral relations.

Jordanian officials said they hoped the talks would produce an agreement for a summit meeting between King Hussein and Saudi Arabia's King Fahd. The two monarchs met last in Cairo at an Arab summit held immediately after the Aug. 2, 1990, invasion of Kuwait.

One of the immediate tangible results of Mr. Kabariti's talks in Riyadh could be

Jordan voices deep concern over Bosnia

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Majesty King Hussein on Friday voiced concern over the situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina to French President Jacques Chirac in the wake of reports that Serbs were attacking another U.N.-declared "safe area" there after seizing the town of Srebrenica and displacing and mistreating tens of thousands of Bosnian Muslims.

The Jordan News Agency, Petra, said the King and President Chirac exchanged views on the situation in Bosnia during a telephone call Friday and agreed to "continue coordination and consultation at various levels to alleviate the suffering of the Bosnian people and ensure the right of the Bosnians to freedom, sovereignty and security."

The two leaders also exchanged views on regional and international issues of common interest.

Earlier, an official spokesman, quoted by Petra, denounced the Serb assault on Bosnian Muslims (see page 12), and reaffirmed Jordan's solidarity with them.

The spokesman voiced deep concern over the situation in Bosnia and said Jordan would extend humanitarian aid to the Bosnian Muslims in line with directives issued by the King.

The spokesman said the government will pursue consultation with Islamic and friendly countries to ensure the implementation of international resolutions which call for the withdrawal of Serb forces and ensuring the unity of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

The spokesman said the government had been following up with deep concern on the suffering of the Muslim people in Bosnia-Herzegovina as "a result of the brutal Serbian attacks on the innocent old people, women and children, particularly the recent attack on the Srebrenica-area, which had been declared a safe haven in accordance with United Nations resolutions."

The spokesman said Serb forces are threatening to attack the rest of the safe areas in Bosnia-Herzegovina and uprooting the Muslim people from their country.

The government called on the international community and the Arab and Islamic nations to stand by the Muslim people in former Yugoslavia and to make every effort to put an end to their suffering and enable those who fled their homes to go back.

The Jordanian government has requested its permanent representative to the United Nations to follow up this subject at the highest U.N. levels to ensure the protection of helpless civilians, deter Serbian forces and help maintain the unity of their soil, the spokesman said.

Boy shot in Nablus

TEL AVIV (AP) — A Palestinian was shot and at least three arrested Friday in stone-throwing incidents on the West Bank. A 17-year-old was shot in the thigh by border police in Nablus, one of four West Bank towns that Israel troops are expected to withdraw from in the fall. An army spokesman said the youth was wounded when police tried to disperse a crowd throwing stones at patrolling police. In Hebron, Palestinians threw stones at border police, who dispersed the crowd and took three people in for questioning, Israel Radio reported.

6 beheaded in S. Arabia for murder

RIYADH (AFP) — Six Saudis were beheaded Friday in the Riyadh area for murder and theft, the interior ministry said. Three of them had killed a fruit-seller, and kidnapped and robbed a petrol station worker. The other three had murdered a Saudi. Some 114 people have been executed in Saudi Arabia since the start of the year compared with 58 in 1994, according to a toll based on official figures.

Three of 10 New Yorkers are poor

NEW YORK (AFP) — Three in 10 residents of New York lived below the poverty line in 1993, a charity organization said Friday. An analysis published by the Community Service Society of New York showed 1.9 million New Yorkers, or 27 per cent of the population, earned less than \$7,363 for the year. "We see this as the result of the contraction of the New York economy," said David Jones, chairman of the organization, which said this figure was the highest ever in its 16-year history. New York's Hispanic population, which represents 24 per cent of the city, was most affected, accounting for 46 per cent of those living below the poverty line. "We've been caught up in a regional recession and it has had the worst impact on unskilled workers," said Mr. Jones.



Israeli soldiers watch Palestinians performing prayers at Al Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem on Friday (AFP photo)

Israel, PLO launch marathon talks to meet July 25 deadline

ZICHRON YAACOV, Israel (Agencies) — Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) on Friday held the first session of intensive talks aimed at reaching an accord on expanding Palestinian self-rule in the West Bank by a signing date of July 25.

Palestinian negotiator Ahmad Qouriea told Reuters the two sides would resume "intensive and continuous" talks on Sunday at a northern Israeli town where they took over a hotel for the duration of negotiations.

"This is a preparatory meeting," Palestinian negotiator Hassan Asfour said of Friday's talks. The delegations begin a marathon effort in earnest on Saturday night, after the Jewish Sabbath, staying days and nights at the hotel.

Zichron Yaacov — meaning "memory of Jacob" — was founded in 1882 near the port city of Haifa. Baron Edmond de Rothschild supported the settlement, named after his father, and it was one of the earliest Jewish settlements of the Zionist movement in Palestine.

The site of the talks, the 110-room Moriah Gardens Hotel overlooking the Mediterranean, was closed to journalists Friday.

However, the two sides still disagree on the dimensions of a pullback from the towns of Ramallah and Bethlehem.

Israel has said its troops would only leave the two towns once bypass roads have been paved for Jewish settlers living in the area. The roads could be ready by the end of the year, Israeli officials have said.

The Palestinians demand that in the weeks leading up to a complete withdrawal from Ramallah and Bethlehem, Israel and the PLO share responsibility for security in the towns.

The two sides also plan to make special arrangements for Hebron, a site of frequent frictions between Palestinians and Jewish settlers.

Some 120,000 Jewish settlers live in the West Bank. Settlers have launched a protest campaign against the imminent troop withdrawal, and earlier this week 42 settlers were detained after blocking a West Bank highway.

The U.S. State Department announced Thursday a U.S. diplomat, at the request of Israel and Palestinian authorities, will participate in ongoing peace talks in the Middle East.

Syria, Israel blame each other for failure to agree on new talks

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — Israel and Syria traded accusations Friday blaming each other for the failure to agree a new date for military talks during a peace shuttle by U.S. envoy Dennis Ross.

"We are waiting for answers from Syria," Itamar Rabinovich, Israel's ambassador to the United States, told reporters after midnight meetings with Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin.

But Syria on Friday said Israel had been at fault for its "exaggerated demands" for security guarantees to accompany any Israeli withdrawal on the occupied Golan Heights as part of a peace deal between the countries.

Officials and diplomats in Damascus said Syrian-Israeli peace contacts will resume at ambassadorial level soon despite Washington's failure to fix a date for military talks between the two sides.

"An announcement on the meetings of the Syrian and Israeli ambassadors to the U.S. will be made later. The talks would be held as usual under the auspices and participation of the United States," a senior Syrian official said.

He did not specify a date for the resumption of the ambassadors' talks but diplomats expected this to be made soon.

Mr. Ross ended a four-day tour of the region on Friday without fixing a date for Syrian-Israeli military talks, originally planned for mid-July.

He told reporters after holding intensive talks with the Syrian and Israeli leaders that more work was needed to narrow the gaps between both sides.

Mr. Rabinovich, Israel's chief negotiator with Syria, accused Damascus of reneging on a pledge made to U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher last month.

Under the deal, both sides were to have two weeks to analyze the negotiations in Washington by Israel's Chief of Staff General Amnon Shapir and his Syrian counterpart General Hikmat Shehadi

Australia to play active role in economic summit

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Australia's role in the multilateral phase of the Middle East peace process and participation in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) economic summit were the key themes for discussions between Australian Foreign Minister Gareth Evans and Jordanian leaders here Friday.

Mr. Evans, who arrived here Thursday and left to Syria and Lebanon on Friday, was received by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan and Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker in separate meetings. He also held talks with Foreign Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti.

The Jordan News Agency, Petra, said the Crown Prince and Mr. Evans reviewed bilateral relations and means to improve them.

The Crown Prince also discussed the MENA summit and means to ensuring the success of the conference, which is expected to be attended by government leaders and a large number of international businessmen and economists.

Petra quoted Mr. Evans as reaffirming that his country would participate actively in the summit and praising Jordan's achievements and the Kingdom's key role in the Middle East and efforts to arrive at a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the region.

Earlier, Mr. Evans told reporters after his meeting with Sharif Zeid that Australia was "well aware of the significance of the Amman summit not only for Jordan but for the wider region."

"I have been asked by both the foreign minister and the prime minister for high-level Australian representation," he said. "We certainly will be presented here, and I will take back that recommendation."

Elections in Australia might make it difficult for high-level "movement out of the country," but "again, we are conscious of how important (the summit) is for this country, for this region as a whole," he said.

"We want to be part of the economic future of this region and we certainly will be represented at the highest level we can," said Mr. Evans.

Petra said Sharif Zeid and Mr. Evans reviewed bilateral relations and other issues of common concern.

The prime minister highlighted the importance of water to the region and the need to find new water sources to meet the needs of agricultural

THE 65th ANNIVERSARY OF ARAB BANK

On the morning of 14th July 1930 the Arab Bank was established in Jerusalem with a paid up capital of 15000 Palestinian pounds (about US\$ 75000). Arab Bank's head office was moved to Amman and the bank was reincorporated in Jordan.

This year, the Arab Bank celebrates its 65th anniversary. It is a public shareholding company owned by 3000 shareholders from all Arab countries.

Currently, Arab Bank Group has a worldwide diversified network of more than 300 branches. It is one of the principal financial institutions in the Arab World and ranks among the leading international banks in terms of equity, earnings and assets. It is engaged in providing a wide variety of financial services to individuals, corporate and institutional customers, government agencies and other international financial institutions. These services include retail banking, private banking, trade financing, merchant banking, commercial lending, real estate lending and international banking.

Jordan, Iraq seriously studying oil pipeline plan

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — A new seriousness has been added to a Jordanian-Iraqi proposal to build a pipeline to bring Iraqi crude to Jordan and replace the present cumbersome overland trucking operations, according to informed sources.

They said the proposal to build the 600 kilometre pipeline, which will run from Haditha in Iraq to the Jordanian Petroleum Refinery Company in Zarqa, was one of the main subjects discussed here during the visit last week of a senior Iraqi minister.

Hussein Kamel, the Iraqi minister of industry, held talks with Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker and Minister of Trade and Industry Ali Abul Ragheb during the visit.

The talks also dealt with Jordanian-Iraqi industrial cooperation and means through which Jordanian industrialists could help their Iraqi counterparts.

The Jordan News Agency, Petra, said the discussions dealt with "bilateral relations, especially in the economic and trade fields, as well as Arab economic integration and joint Arab industries and the need to revitalise this sector."

Mr. Kamel told Jordan Television that said Jordan and Iraq were seeking to increase industrial cooperation. He said the discussions also covered the pipeline project.

"The pipeline proposal was reviewed closely and there is a new focus on realising the proposal since the overland trucking of oil from Iraq is getting too expensive and cumbersome," said a source.

others, Jordan is hoping to launch a serious feasibility study on the project soon, and is expecting the Middle East and North Africa economic summit to be held here in October to give a clearer shape to the project.

Industrial cooperation

The Amman Chamber of Industry and the Federation of Iraqi Chambers of Industry have signed an agreement that calls for increased industrial cooperation through exchange of expertise and consultations.

The full potential of the agreement, according to Amman Chamber of Industry officials, cannot be realised until the international sanctions against Iraq are removed.

In the meantime, the two sides can cooperate in technical matters, the officials said.

The initial focus would be on how Jordanian industries could advise Iraqis to convert some of their military industries to civilian purposes.

Large and expensive equipment and machinery at military plants are now idle in Iraq following the limitations imposed on the country's military weapons programme in line with the Gulf war ceasefire resolutions.

Iraq is seeking Jordanian expertise on using some of those equipment for civilian purposes on a commercial basis.

Pipeline project

The oil pipeline project is one of the priority proposals of Jordan, which continues to receive about 70,000 barrels of oil daily from Iraq — 50,000 barrels of crude and 20,000 barrels of fuel oil — under an exemption granted by the U.N. Security Council

Sanctions Committee

The proposed pipeline will have a capacity to pump 250,000 barrels per day, but the actual quantity is expected to be limited to 100,000 barrels.

Preliminary studies indicate that, in order to meet rising demands for oil in Jordan, work on the 122-centimetre diameter pipeline should start in 1996 and be complete by 1998.

"Our objective is to cover the needs of Jordan — namely 250,000 barrels of oil" per day by the year 2000, Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources Samih Darwazeh told the Jordan Times in an April interview.

He said there was no plan to pump Iraqi oil through the pipeline for export.

The preliminary studies, which envisaged two phases of the project — the 600-kilometre section from Haditha to Zarqa and a 350-kilometre section from Zarqa to Aqaba — estimated the total cost at about \$1.4 billion.

The estimated cost of the first phase was not immediately available.

The Zarqa-Aqaba section of the project will depend on the realisation of a project to build a refinery at Aqaba.

At present, Jordan spends about JD 40 million a year for trucking Iraqi oil to Zarqa.

Iraq levies international prices for the oil but offers a \$1 discount because it is trucked overland, according to Mr. Darwazeh, who in April renewed signed a Jordanian-Iraqi agreement for the supply of oil.

Part of the oil comes in settlement of pre-Gulf war crisis Iraqi debts to Jordan. Amman settles the other part with food and medicine exports to Iraq.



CROWN PRINCE MEETS EVANS: His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan holds talks with Australian Foreign Minister Gareth Evans (centre) in Amman on Friday in a

American rabbis urge Congress to keep backing peace process

WASHINGTON (Agencies)

U.S. rabbis called on Congress Thursday to renew its support for the Middle East peace process, a day after Orthodox rabbis in Israel opposed military withdrawal from the West Bank.

Four U.S. rabbis, representing 600 of their colleagues, denounced a letter by 15 Israeli rabbis who called Wednesday on Israeli soldiers to ignore government orders to withdraw from the West Bank.

They said the Israeli rabbis' call was "fostering instability in Israeli society," but probably did not echo majority of Israeli sentiment.

The four circulated a letter in Congress signed by 600 fellow rabbis from over 40 states that called on Congress to maintain its funding of the Middle East peace process "so that peace and security for Israel can become a reality."

The U.S. rabbis' action came at a time when Congress is considering whether to renew the Middle East Peace Facilitation Act (MEPFA).

The act recognised the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) as the official Palestinian authority and allows the United States to fund it.

The letter voiced strong support for the steps taken by the government of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin to further peace.

Rabbi Jonathan Rosenblatt of the Riverdale Jewish Centre, Rabbi Sidney Schwartz of the Adat Shalom Reconstructionist Congregation, Rabbi Amiel Hirsch of the Association of Reform Zionists of America, and Rabbi Stewart Weinblatt of the B'Nai Tzedek Congregation spoke out on the issue during a Capitol press conference.

They said the mobilisation of 600 rabbis to write Congress was also intended to counter a campaign a few weeks ago by New York rabbis who are sceptical of the peace process to prevent renewal of MEPFA.

Action had to be taken to inform Congress that the New York rabbis' stance was not representative of the entire U.S. Jewish community, they said.

They accused the New York rabbi and other peace process critics in the United

States of "playing on the instincts of the members of Congress who are all pro-Israeli."

Such action was deceitful, they said, because in the present context only peace could help strengthen an Israel faced with the growing threat of religious fanaticism.

The four rabbis praised the PLO for keeping its promise to oppose violence and stressed that Israel's security could only be furthered by bolstering the Palestinian Authority.

They warned that a U.S. withdrawal from MEPPA would cause other countries to follow suit, with "devastating consequences for the peace process."

The administration meanwhile asked Congress to let it continue helping pay for government operations and economic development in Gaza and the West Bank.

The request received a boost from the American rabbis.

Already extended for 45 days, the MEPFA act, which the Palestinian Authority.

"This legislation is a key element underpinning our assistance programme," Richard Roth of the State Department told a senate panel. "It has helped PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat of the importance of seriously addressing security issues as a prerequisite to progress."

In earlier hearings, U.S. lawmakers have heard State Department assessments that Mr. Arafat lacked the political will and his police lacked the training and expertise to crack down on Palestinian groups bent on aborting peace moves through violence.

Mr. Roth, head of the department's Office of Israel and Arab-Israeli Affairs, reported Thursday "remarkable achievements" towards greater Palestinian security enforcement, heightening Israeli confidence to accommodate Palestinian needs.

The administration wants a "longer-term extension (of the spending law) while permitting us to continue our leading role in the donor effort for the Palestinians," Mr. Roth said.

State Department and congressional experts are negotiating an extension, said department spokeswoman Julia Arrighetti.

Barak fights for political life

TEL AVIV (R) — A former Israeli army chief battled for his political life on Thursday in a hard-hitting national television appearance in which he denied ignoring wounded soldiers in the field.

Retired Lieutenant-General Ehud Barak, 53, is on a political fast track and has long been touted as a future prime minister. He is slated to become interior minister in August, just six months after completing his term as army chief of staff.

Last Friday, Israel's most popular newspaper, Yedioth Ahronoth, landed the general in a media minefield.

It quoted witnesses as saying that Sen. Barak stood with his arms folded and did nothing when a missile exploded near a group of soldiers during a 1992 training exercise. Five were killed and six wounded.

"The report is totally malicious," Sen. Barak said in an Israeli television interview in which he stressed that "two to three people" had tended to each casualty while he kept his cool and coordinated a helicopter evacuation as a senior officer should.

"Simply did what I think a chief of staff should do and what any other army chief would have done in my place," Sen. Barak said.

He described the editors of Yedioth Ahronoth as "a militant and power-hungry group trying to carry out a political timed character assassination."

Yedioth editor Moshe Vardy responded in a statement which said Sen. Barak "had grown accustomed only to complimentary news reports."

Sen. Barak has all the traditional qualifications of a top Israeli political leader — a vaunted military record and a demeanour that bucks challenge, much like his mentor, Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin.

Speaking about himself in the third-person, Sen. Barak said: "He has been in the field 35 years and personally led dozens of operations."

"He has been shot at, not just once, from a distance no further than that between you and me," Sen. Barak told his television interviewer. "He has shot people from a distance at which you see the white of their eyes."

NEWS IN BRIEF

'Syria trying to buy reactor from Argentina

TEL AVIV (AP) — A newspaper reported Friday that Israel is concerned about attempts by Syria to buy a nuclear reactor from Argentina and will seek U.S. intervention. Foreign Minister Shimon Peres has asked the Israeli ambassador to Washington, Itamar Rabinovich, to take up the issue with U.S. State Department officials, Yedioth said. Israel's atomic energy commission advised the foreign ministry this week that "Israel must strongly oppose the intention of Argentina to sell to Syria a nuclear reactor for research purposes," Yedioth said. "The Syrian requests reflect a desire to develop a comprehensive national nuclear project," Yedioth quoted from the commission's letter to the foreign ministry. Argentine officials have assured Israel in recent months that they did not plan to sell a nuclear reactor to Syria, the newspaper said. However, it has become known that Argentina has notified the United States of its plans to sell such a reactor to Syria, the newspaper said.

Lebanon smashes counterfeiting ring

BEIRUT (AP) — Authorities have smashed a Lebanese counterfeiting ring after it marketed \$2 billion in forged 100 bills throughout the Middle East, judicial sources said Friday. Ring members admitted also forging large amounts of deutschmarks, Saudi Arabian riyals and UAE dirhams in 500-unit denominations since 1982, the sources said, speaking on condition of anonymity. Thirteen members of the ring, belonging to various sectarian communities, have been arrested. A manhunt for four others was still under way, the sources said, declining to give arrest dates. The detainees confessed they operated from east Lebanon's Bekaa Valley for the past 13 years, using four sophisticated printing machines and the same paper for the different currencies, the sources added. Reports in the U.S. and Middle Eastern media have recently spoken of massive dollar counterfeiting operations in the Bekaa Valley since the latter years of Lebanon's 1975-1990 civil war. They said a four-man team of Saudi experts is taking part in the interrogation of the suspects. The U.S. and German embassies refused comment.

Sudan retires 70 army officers

KHARTOUM (AFP) — The Sudanese army sent into retirement 70 high-ranking officers, including three generals, army sources said on Thursday. The retirements were not for political reasons, the sources said, underscoring that they came "routinely at the beginning of every fiscal year" and were "dictated by the process of promotions and transfers." General Al Rashid Mahjoub, commander of the Wadi Sayedna air base, Mohammed Salih Khalil, director of foreign procurements, and Mohammed Abdullah Farah, whose post was not specified, headed the list of retirees. Some 25 colonels among the retired were promoted to brigadiere after their dismissal and the remaining officers ranked between lieutenant colonel and lieutenant. The sources said. Some of the officers could be appointed to political posts later, the source said, noting that General Mansur Abdul Rahim, retired in 1993, was now a state minister for defence.

Prosecutor urges review of Jarallah verdict

CAIRO (AFP) — The Egyptian prosecutor general's office has called for a review of the jail sentence imposed on a Kuwaiti journalist for defamation, Al Ahran newspaper reported. Ahmad Al Jarallah, editor of the Kuwaiti newspaper Al Siyassah, was sentenced in absentia on June 8 to two years imprisonment for defamation of an Egyptian television presenter, Nagwa Ibrahim. The prosecutor's office called for a review of the court's verdict on procedural grounds. Al Siyassah reported that Ms. Ibrahim had been implicated in drug trafficking. The story was based on a report from the Syrian news agency SANA which later ran a denial but the Kuwaiti daily failed to publish it. Under Egyptian law, Mr. Jarallah would have to be tried again if arrested inside the country.

Flood kills at least 15 in Turkish town

ANKARA (R) — Flash floods have inundated a town in western Turkey, killing at least 15 people and injuring 30, Anatolian news agency said on Friday. Heavy rain swept away about 60 homes in the town of Senirkent, in Isparta province, the agency quoted Governor Ertugrul Bokuzoglu as saying. "Fifteen bodies have been taken from under the rubble," Mr. Bokuzoglu said. He said 30 people were injured and he feared emergency services would find more bodies under the mud and debris. Interior Minister Nihat Metense flew to the town together with rescue teams with sniffer dogs. Unseasonal rains in the past week have caused flooding which killed at least six people and damaged more than 3,000 homes in Istanbul and Ankara.

Kurd rebels abduct Japanese tourist

ANKARA (R) — Kurdish rebels have kidnapped a Japanese tourist from a bus in southeast Turkey, Anatolian news agency said on Friday. Kurdish Labour Party (PKK) guerrillas abducted the tourist at a rebel checkpoint on a road near the town of Siirt on Thursday night after extorting money from passengers, the agency said. It said the tourist's personal details were not immediately available. The rebels set fire to a lorry and clashed with security forces during the abduction but the agency did not say if there were any casualties. An operation to find the tourist was launched, Anatolian said. The PKK, fighting for independence or autonomy in southeast Turkey, has often kidnapped foreign tourists in the region in recent years. All have been freed unharmed.

U.S., Saudi pressure may force Qatar to cool ties with Iran

DOHA (AFP) — Qatar's new emir, who took power in a bloodless coup last month, may be forced to cool his country's relations with Iran under U.S. and Saudi pressure, diplomats here said.

Qatar is all the more sensitive to such pressure because it needs the United States to help it develop its immense natural gas field which it shares with Iran, they added. "Riyadh's said Washington's quick recognition of the new Qatari government took place after Doha gave assurances it would distance itself from Iran," an Arab diplomat told AFP.

Qatari government officials, however, said they gave no such assurances.

The new emir, Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa Al Thani, who overthrew his father on June 27, had in the last few years started a rapprochement with Iran and Iraq that troubled both its Gulf Arab neighbours and the United States.

But its ties with Iraq have not stirred too much concern, a diplomat added. "Washington and Riyadh know full well that a small country like Qatar cannot violate" sanctions against Iraq, which were imposed after its 1990 invasion of Kuwait, he said.

In a press conference last week, Qatari Foreign Minister Sheikh Hamad Ben Jassem Al Thani said that even if



Sheikh Hamad Al Thani

his country felt solidarity towards the Iraqi people, "Iraq must apply all U.N. resolutions."

Another diplomat said "sugar diplomacy doesn't really bother anyone and does not violate international resolutions."

Qatar early this year sent two shipments of sugar to Baghdad to ease the "suffering of the Iraqi people" under the embargo.

"Except for reestablishing diplomatic relations and Doha's repeated calls for lifting the embargo, Qatar and Iraq have almost no economic ties," the diplomat said.

However, improved ties with Iran would seriously concern Gulf Arab states, he added. "Riyadh insists that the rapprochement begun be-

tween Qatar and Iran in 1992 must not hurt the GCC (Gulf Cooperation Council)."

Saudi Arabia does not want "Iran to succeed in undermining the council," which also groups Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Oman.

Qatar has signed several trade agreements with Iran and says Iran cannot be ignored when the six Gulf Arab monarchies discuss ways to ensure regional security.

Sheikh Hamad Ben Jassem has also left the door open for a change in course in foreign policy.

Qatar is relying on the United States and their oil companies Mobil and Enron to develop liquefied natural gas in the North Field.

Doha will develop this field, which holds around five trillion cubic metres of gas on the Qatari side and three trillion cubic metres on the Iranian side, but hand 10 per cent of the revenues to Iran, economists here said.

"Qatar fears Iran will demand an increase in the percentage and the participation of American companies is a kind of guarantee against such a demand," another diplomat explained.

The foreign minister stressed that ties with Iran would harm nobody's interests and would follow the principle of non-interference in the Gulf countries' affairs.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel: 773111-14

PROGRAMME TWO

14:00 ... Back to the Future
14:30 ... Harry and the Hendersons
15:00 ... Road to Avonlea
15:30 ... Families
16:00 ... Les Lumiere Du Bout Du Monde
17:30 ... Ambitions
19:00 ... News in French
19:30 ... New Headlines
19:35 ... First Flights
20:00 ... Major Dad
20:30 ... The Bold and the Beautiful
21:15 ... Dr. Quinn-Medicine Woman
22:00 ... News in English
22:25 ... Touch of Truth

PRAYER TIMES

04:03 ... Fajr
05:35 ... (Sunrise) Dhuhr
12:41 ... Dhuhr
16:22 ... Asr
19:48 ... Maghreb
21:20 ... 'Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Swedish Tel: 810740
Assemblies of God Church, Tel: 632785
St. Joseph Church Tel: 624590
Church of the Assumption Tel: 637440
De la Salle Church Tel: 661757

TERRESTRIAL CHURCH

Tel: 622246
Church of the Annunciation Tel: 623541
Anglican Church Tel: 620851, Tel: 62843
Armenian Catholic Church Tel: 771331
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel: 772561
St. Ephraim Church Tel: 771751
Amman International Church Tel: 625528
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel: 624528
German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel: 664195
The Latter-Day Saints Tel: 654932
Church of Nazareth Tel: 675691
The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel: 811295

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.
Moderate weather conditions will prevail with winds northwesterly to moderate to active in Aqaba, winds will be northerly moderate and sea calm.

Min./Max. temp.
Amman ... 18 / 31
Aqaba ... 25 / 34
Deserts ... 16 / 34
Jordan Valley ... 24 / 38

Yesterday's high temperatures:
Amman 28, Aqaba 37 Humidity

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:
Dr. Mubhles Halasa ... 819220
Dr. Jihad Ziyadeh ... 811148
Dr. Farouq Nour ... 766681
Dr. Abdul Rahim Mustafa ... 766685
Firas pharmacy ... 661912
Firdous pharmacy ... 778339
Al Asma pharmacy ... 627055
Nasroukh pharmacy ... 623672
Al Salam pharmacy ... 626720
Yacoub pharmacy ... 664405
Shimrani pharmacy ... 637661
Nayib pharmacy ... 847652

IRBID:
Dr. Mohammad Khalili ... 273099
Alquds pharmacy ... (—)

ZARQA:
Dr. Yousef Harzallah ... 980075
Khalifeh pharmacy ... 985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre ... 637111

Civil Defence Department

Civil Defence Department ... 661111
Civil Defence Immediate Rescue ... 630341
Civil Defence Emergency ... 109
Recue Police ... 192, 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade ... 617101
Blood Bank ... 775121
Highway Police ... 643402
Traffic Police ... 896301
Public Security Department ... 630321
Hotel Complaints ... 405481
Price Complaints ... 661176
Water and Sewerage ... 897467
Amman Municipality ... 787111
Complaints ... 623101
Telephone Information (directories assistance) ... 121
Overseas Calls ... 110230
Central Amman Telephone ... 623101
Repairs ... 623101
Abdali Telephone Repairs ... 661101
Jordan Television ... 773111
Radio Jordan ... 773111
Water Authority ... 660110
Jordan Electricity Authority ... 815615

Electric Power ... 636381
Flight Information ... 865320
Queen Alia Intl. Airport ... 665320

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre ... 812013-32

Khalidi Maternity, J. Amn

Khalidi Maternity, J. Amn ... 664281-6
Jahul Amman Maternity ... 642642
Majidi, J. Amman ... 636140
Palestine Shimsani ... 6641714
Shimsani Hospital ... 669131
University Hospital ... 845845
Al-Muasher Hospital ... 667270
The Islamic Hospital ... 66012757
Al-Ahli, Abdali ... 6641646
Al-Hadi, Abdali ... 7771013
Al-Bahar, J. Ashrafieh ... 7751126
Army, Marja ... 89161015
Queen Alia Hospital ... 62234050
Amal Hospital ... 674155
The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery ... 665199
ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital ... 61983323
Zarqa National Hospital ... 61983323
Ibn Sina Hospital ... 61983323
Al-Hikma Modern Hospital ... 61983323
IRBID:
Princess Bona Hospital ... 61215555
Greek Catholic Hospital ... 61212225
Al-Nafes Hospital ... 61212700
Water Authority ... 660110
Princess Haya Hospital ... 61214111

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL

AIRPORT

The information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel: (011) 512015, where it should always be verified.

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights

06:00 ... Jakarta, Singapore (RJ)
07:30 ... Damascus (RJ)
09:45 ... New Delhi (RJ)
10:15 ... Adana (RJ)
10:30 ... Beirut (RJ)
10:30 ... Kathari, Dubai (RJ)
11:00 ... Abu Dhabi, Dubai (RJ)
11:00 ... New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
17:45 ... London (RJ)
18:25 ... Istanbul (RJ)
19:00 ... Cairo, Alexandria (RJ)
20:30 ... Vienna (RJ)
21:00 ... Frankfurt, Berlin (add RJ)
03:00 ... Madrid (add RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

04:20 ... Vienna (OS)
11:10 ... Damascus (AZ)
12:40 ... Sharjah, Dubai (GF)

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights

(Terminal 1)

06:05 ... Beirut (RJ)
06:00 ... Adana (RJ)
09:40 ... Berlin, Frankfurt, (add RJ)
11:25 ... Vienna (RJ)
12:30 ... Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
12:40 ... Istanbul (RJ)
12:45 ... Geneva, Madrid (RJ)
12:55 ... Athens, Athens (RJ)
13:00 ... Brussels, Amsterdam (RJ)
13:15 ... Cairo, Alexandria (RJ)
13:55 ... London (RJ)
21:00 ... Larnaca (RJ)
21:00 ... Riyadh, Dhahran (RJ)
21:30 ... Abu Dhabi, Dubai (RJ)
22:30 ... Bahrain, Doha (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

06:05 ... Beirut (ME)
12:10 ... Rome (AZ)
13:00 ... Riyadh (add RJ)
13:40 ... Bahrain (OS)
14:30 ... Bahrain (OS)
22:25 ... Cairo (MS)
23:30 ... Larnaca (CY)

HIJAZ RAILWAY TRAIN

Dep. Amman ... 8:00 a.m. every Monday
Arr. Damascus ... 5:10 p.m. every Monday
Dep. Damascus ... 7:30 a.m. every Sunday
Arr. Amman ... 5:10 p.m. every Sunday

MARKET PRICES

Upper/lower price in fils per kg.

Apple ... 700 / 500
Apricot ... 600 / 400
Banana ... 600 / 400
Banana (Mukammal) ... 600
Cabbage ... 100 / 50
Cauliflower ... 200 / 120
Cucumbers (large) ... 320 / 200
Cucumbers (small) ... 120 / 80
Eggplant ... 160 / 80
Garlic ... 650 / 450
Lemon ... 500 / 300
Marrow (large) ... 420 / 300
Marrow (small) ... 230

Home News



Minister of Municipal Affairs and the Environment Nader Thuheirat Thursday declares final results of the municipal elections that were held Tuesday and Wednesday (Petra photo)

Thuheirat: Elections 'fair and free'

AMMAN (J.T.) — Minister of Municipal and Rural Affairs and the Environment Nader Thuheirat addressed a press conference Thursday to sum up the results of the municipal elections in Jordan.

Addressing the press one day after the end of the elections which were held Tuesday and Wednesday, the minister said that the elections were held in a fair, free and democratic atmosphere and that there were no violations whatsoever of municipal laws and regulations.

The Islamic Action Front (IAF) candidates won the mayorship in ten councils which included those in Irbid, Madaba and Karak cities and those in the small towns of Lib. Ma'in, Kufrunjeh, Malih Rawda, Kufur Almaa and Ain Jannah, Mr. Thuheirat said.

A total of 23 members of the IAF won as members in several areas including three in Karak, two in Aqaba, four in Jerash, six in Irbid, one in Ajloun, one in Balqa, two in Madaba, five in Zarqa, two in Tafleeh, one in Mafraq,

and three in the Amman area, according to the minister.

Results show that the IAF won .018 per cent of the seats and 3.9 per cent of the mayorships.

The ministry, Mr. Thuheirat announced, is currently preparing for a general conference for all mayors, 99 per cent of whom are serving on councils for the first time.

In his reference to cooperative measures between the ministry and the councils where IAF members won seats, the minister said local governments are independent and have authorities invested in them by the municipal law and that therefore they can exercise their work freely and without any intervention from any one.

The ministry, he noted, deals with the councils as representatives of local communities and not on the strength of their political views. Mr. Thuheirat also added that since most of the councils suffer from accumulated debts, assistance from the ministry is always necessary.

The minister estimated the rate of women participation in the elections at 48.6 per cent, while 125 judges chaired committees entrusted with counting the votes among the 259 committees.

All in all, according to Mr. Thuheirat, 13,000 officials were involved in the elections procedures and the number of registered voters was 798,274 of whom 71.33 per cent voted in the elections.

Mr. Thuheirat also announced that the ministry was in the process of expanding its cooperation with the local councils and involving the Cities and Villages Development Bank in financing local projects.

The Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs and the Environment said in a statement later that the following women won seats in the councils: Amneh Bia'aydeh, Karak, Ibtisam Ushush, Ghor Safi, Aisheh Abu Salem, Irbid, Fandieh Umeish, Huson, Najah Abu Hazim, Mahis, Muayassar Abbadi, Yaraqa, Siham Madani, Fuhais, Faddah Hadidi, Twaal and Muntaha Isheid, Madaba.

49% pass Tawjihi

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Ministry of Education Thursday announced the results of the Tawjihi examinations of the 1994-1995 scholastic year in the literary, scientific, commercial, agricultural, industrial, nursing and hotel management fields.

The results of the Tawjihi exams, sat for by 77,067 students out of a registered 84,358 in the Kingdom, were announced by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Education Abdul Raouf Rawabdeh at a press conference.

Forty-nine per cent of those who sat for their examinations passed, while 1,894 students were disqualified from sitting for their examinations for having exceeded the limit of school absenteeism, Mr. Rawabdeh said.

Percentages of those who passed in each category were 41.2 per cent in the literary stream, 61.5 per cent in the scientific stream, 49 per cent in the commercial, 37.5 per cent in the agricultural, 51.4 per cent in the industrial, 62.4 per cent in nursing and 59.2 per cent in hotel management, according to Mr. Rawabdeh.

Female students came on the top of the list of successful students in the literary, commercial and nursing streams, the minister said.

The minister also stated that results were relatively low in the literary stream and that students in the vocational streams fared much better.

The Ministry of Education apparently chose to delay the announcement of the results until after the results of the municipal elections so as not to influence the course of municipal voting in any way, according to Mr. Rawabdeh.

Mr. Rawabdeh expressed satisfaction with the Tawjihi results and said that the ministry was able to work faster at obtaining this year's results because it had opened marking centres in Karak, Ma'an, Balqa and Zarqa as opposed to only Amman and Irbid in the previous years.

Jordan and Yemen hold trade talks

AMMAN (Petra) — Minister of Supply Adel Qudah Friday held talks with his Yemeni counterpart, Abdul Rahman Balfadel, to discuss economic and trade relations between Jordan and Yemen. The two ministers reviewed ways in which they can promote economic and trade ties between the two countries.

Dr Balfadel, who is accompanying President Ali Abdullah Saleh on his visit to Jordan, outlined the areas where investment is possible in Yemen and singled out the fisheries industries as the main area available for investors at the present moment.

The Yemeni minister called on the Jordanian private sector to coordinate with their colleagues in Yemen in order to enhance trade and economic relations between the two countries. He pledged full support from the Yemeni government in this effort.

Seven-year-old killed, 3 injured in road accident

Zarqa (Petra) — A seven-year-old girl was killed and three members of her family were injured Thursday when the small truck they were in overturned near the oil refinery on the Zarqa road.

Rihab Ali Khalaf was killed in the accident while her father Ali (55), her brothers Jihad and

Imad (13 and 10) were injured in the accident.

The three of them were rushed to Prince Hashem hospital and were listed in moderate condition. Hospital sources said the injured suffered fractures and bruises and are being treated at the hospital.

Save water... every drop counts!

Kabariti visits S. Arabia today

(Continued from page 1)

the return of the Saudi ambassador to Jordan to raise the charge d'affaires-level of representation at the Saudi mission here since Riyadh recalled the envoy in 1991.

Jordan sent back its ambassador to Riyadh early this year.

In comments to reporters on Thursday, President Saleh said he was not mediating between Jordan and Saudi Arabia but that he briefed King Hussein on the talks he held with King Fahd in Riyadh in his first visit there after the Gulf crisis.

President Saleh said last month that King Fahd had raised the issue with him and told him that he wanted to improve relations with Jordan.

Saudi Arabia had been resisting repeated Jordanian efforts for reconciliation, and the official invitation ex-

tended to Mr. Kabariti was taken as a sign of a shift in that position.

Riyadh has already lifted several restrictions it imposed on Jordanians since the Gulf crisis. These include multiple-entry visas to Jordanians truck drivers who transit through Saudi territory, increased visas for Jordanians to work in Saudi Arabia and permission of family members to join Jordanian expatriates in Saudi Arabia.

Mr. Kabariti's visit to Saudi Arabia comes after an intense effort he launched on the diplomatic level to improve Jordan's ties with all Arab countries. He has already visited the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Oman, Qatar and Bahrain, Saudi Arabia's partners in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) along with Kuwait.

reconciliation efforts were former Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali and former Speaker of the Lower House of Parliament Akef Al Fayed, according to the sources. Details of Dr. Majali's and Mr. Fayed's efforts were not immediately available.

According to informed sources, Mr. Kabariti had been holding behind-the-scenes meeting with Arab diplomats from the Gulf since he took over as foreign minister in January.

Better Saudi-Jordanian relations are also expected to lead to an improvement in ties between Jordan and Kuwait.

Sources said Jordan was hoping to reopen its embassy in Kuwait City in the next two months. The mission was closed shortly after the liberation of Kuwait in early 1991.

According to the sources, Mr. Kabariti had been receiving "positive signals" from Kuwait to his efforts to improve relations.



His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan Friday receives at the Royal Court Ibrahim Abdullah Hassan, who was victimised in the West following the Oklahoma blast last April. (Petra photo)

Prince Hassan receives suspect victim of Oklahoma City blast

Amman (Petra) — His Royal Highness Prince Hassan Thursday received at the Royal Court Ibrahim Abdullah Hassan, a Jordanian citizen, who was recently acquitted by US courts, of charges that he was responsible for the blowing up of the Federal building in Oklahoma early this year.

Mr. Hassan, who lives in the United States, voiced appreciation to Prince Hassan for receiving him and for the interest he showed in his case.

Mr. Hassan, who arrived recently from the U.S., praised Prince Hassan's efforts to amend the image of Islam in the West, defend the interests of Muslims, and to spread Islam's message of tolerance, moral values and principles in the international arena.

Prince Hassan was briefed by Mr. Hassan on the cruel treatment he was

subjected to when held as a suspect after the April Oklahoma bombing which killed 164 people. He spoke about his suffering and that of his family as a result of the inhumane treatment they received at the hands of U.S. officials.

US authorities arrested Mr. Hassan upon receiving information from Americans who said that they saw some people with Middle Eastern features in the area where the explosion took place.

Mr. Hassan, however, said several US officials officially apologised to him after he was found innocent and cleared from the charges labelled against him.

Those who apologised officially were the Oklahoma governor and the Oklahoma representative at the US Senate, he said.

Mr. Hassan thanked the Jordanian government for

its interest in him and for following up on his case. He called upon the international community to learn from this experience and to cease accusations against Arabs and Muslims in the events of terrorist attacks.

Islam does not allow the killing of innocent people, he said.

Mr. Hassan was born in the Israeli-occupied West Bank town of Jenin in 1963. He was in Chicago airport right after the blast where he was first questioned and then released. His Rome-bound luggage arrived without him, where it drew the attention of Italian airport authorities for containing material that 'could be used to make explosives'. Mr. Hassan was then detained by British officials in London and sent back to the U.S. for questioning.

Princess Sumaya to graduate 1st batch of college students

Amman (Petra) — Under the Patronage of Her Royal Highness Princess Sumaya Bint Al Hassan, the first batch of graduates from Princess Sumaya University College For Technology will be graduated today, after successfully completing requirements of graduation from the college.

According to College Dean Mohammad Qasem Qarioti, this is the first batch of graduates from the college which was established in 1991 to offer bachelor degrees in computer science.

The 72 graduates, he



Princess Sumaya

said, have been trained to join the labour market

immediately upon graduation because of the specialised training they received at the hands of the college. Courses, which focus on computer science and electronic engineering, seek to meet local and Arab labour markets needs for well-trained specialists in computer and electronic engineering. The computer science programme, offered at the college, has been approved by the Ministry of Higher Education, while the electronic engineering programme is still awaiting accreditation by the ministry, Mr. Qarioti said.

Nabulsi: Criticism unfounded

(Continued from page 12)

said, pointing out that there were 329 cases involving a total of JD 450 million.

Given the size of the amount and number of cases of involved, the litigation charges were negligible—0.5 per cent — he pointed out.

Another 14 per cent of the expenses represented re-trenchment benefits paid to Petra Bank employees when their services were terminated at the outset of the work of the liquidation committee, Dr. Nabulsi said. The rest represented general expenses.

The honorarium paid for the members of the liquidation committee does not exceed an average of JD 1,700 per month since the beginning of the committee's work, he said.

"All the expenses of the liquidation committee are closely supervised and subject to close detailed inspection by the auditors of the Central Bank," he said. "There are very clear contracts and agreements which are verified and authenticated."

In general, he said, the

expenses of the committee represented 7.9 per cent of the amount it collected since it began its work and it is very low compared to the amount it seeks to collect.

The CBJ governor also rejected as out of context a statement taken from the report of Arthur Anderson, The international auditing firm which inspected the books of Petra Bank, that the collapsed bank's total losses amounted to "eight times the capital and reserves."

The liquidation committee has collected much more than Arthur Anderson estimated it would collect, and, committee members said recently, they stood to collect another significant part of the dues owed to Petra Bank, Dr. Nabulsi said.

As to Parliament's recent decision to refer the case to the prosecutor general to check for irregularities, Dr. Nabulsi said: "We at the Central Bank of Jordan welcome all inquiries and investigations since we are confident that close inspection would only establish the true facts in the affair."

CROWN PRINCE AWARD: Her Royal Highnesses Princess Rahma Bint Al Hassan Friday attends the graduation of participants in the silver phase of the Crown Prince Award programme. At a special ceremony held at Qala't Ajloun (Ajloun castle), Princess Rahma delivered certificates to 63 girls who took part in the programme, organised by the Crown Prince Award Office. Princess Rahma, along with the

graduating girls, toured Ajloun castle and were briefed by the Department of Antiquities director on the castle's history and the restoration works done by the department. On Thursday Princess Rahma participated in the scientific day activities in Ajloun, which included dismantling and fixing firearms, shooting and mountain climbing (Petra photo)

WHAT'S GOING ON

LECTURE

* Lecture (in Arabic) entitled "The Arab Nation: Present and Future" by former Egyptian Prime Minister Aziz Sedki at Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation, Jabal Amman at 6.30 p.m.

EXHIBITIONS

* Works by Khdeir Shukraji at Ab'ad Art Gallery.
* Paintings by Muhannad Bushnaq at Balqa Art Gallery.
* Paintings by Adnan Yahyah at Darat Al Funun.
* Exhibition demonstrating the development of cinema over the past century at the French Cultural Centre.

China's Qian blames U.S. on strained ties, wants pledge

BONN (R) — China's Foreign Minister Qian Qichen blamed the United States Friday for a row between the two countries, worsened by Beijing's arrest of human rights activist Harry Wu on spying charges.

He urged Washington to promise to refrain from action that would strain bilateral relations as a way to heal tensions.

China has been angered by a U.S. decision to allow a visit by Taiwan President Lee Teng-hui, even though Beijing considers Taiwan a rebel province.

Relations were further hit by the arrest of Mr. Wu, a Chinese-American last month.

"The current difficulties in Sino-U.S. relations are caused entirely by the United States," Mr. Qian told a news conference during a state visit by Chinese President Jiang Zemin.

Asked what China expected Washington to do about this, Mr. Qian replied: "I believe it must be stated that

recent actions by the United States have been erroneous actions and that such actions will not be repeated in future."

Mr. Qian reiterated China's position that the case of Mr. Wu, whom the U.S. wants freed immediately, was a matter for the courts.

Mr. Wu, born in China but now a U.S. citizen, spent 19 years in Chinese prison labour camps for dissident activities.

The U.S. State Department maintains he is not a spy and says his detention will damage bilateral relations.

"He went to China not as a tourist, nor to visit any of his relatives, nor to attend any international conference," Mr. Qian said. "What was his purpose? We will see after the trial."

The United States, reacting to Beijing's conditions for repairing damaged ties, Thursday reaffirmed its long-held view that Taiwan is part of China.

The administration also

ruled out moving a U.N. conference from China to another venue, rejecting pressure to retaliate over the June 19 arrest of human rights activist Harry Wu.

Meanwhile, former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger warned that Sino-U.S. relations are in a "free fall" and called for a cooling-off period in the dispute over Mr. Wu.

China Thursday softened its tone toward the United States, urging patience in Mr. Wu's case but repeating its call for concrete action by Washington to improve ties.

State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns replied: "We have shown a great deal of patience." He called for Mr. Wu's immediate release and said it is up to Beijing to act to stabilise the relationship.

The New York Times, reporting on an interview with a senior Chinese official, said Beijing demanded that Mr. Clinton personally reaffirm there is only one China and

Taiwan is part of it, and declare Mr. Lee will not be allowed more U.S. visits.

U.S. officials said China privately made similar requests, prompting recent reaffirmations of the one-China policy.

"There's no need... to restate the American view that there is one China," Mr. McCurry told reporters. "That is consistently stated U.S. policy and we accept the Chinese view that Taiwan is part of China."

As for Mr. Lee visiting the United States, Mr. McCurry said: "According to our policy, President Lee would not be allowed to make an official visit to the United States (but any requests for private visits) we would consider on a case-by-case basis." No requests have been made, he said.

U.S. officials said privately it is virtually certain Mr. Lee will not get a visa for a return U.S. visit soon although visits by other Taiwanese officials may be permitted.



The crew of the space shuttle Discovery (bottom left to right) Nancy Currie, Mary Weber, Commander Tom Henricks, (top left to right) Donald Thomas and pilot Kevin Kregel leave the crew quarters at Kennedy Centre for the short trip to launch pad 39-B to board the shuttle. The Discovery is set for an eight-day mission to place a Tracking and Data Relay Satellite in orbit (AFP photo)

Shuttle crew deploys NASA satellite

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. (R) — The space shuttle Discovery, delayed five weeks by lovelorn woodpeckers, finally took wing Thursday and successfully placed a huge NASA communications satellite into orbit.

Discovery's crew of five astronauts accomplished the chief goal of their mission just a little more than six hours after liftoff when they ejected the massive satellite from the shuttle's open cargo bay.

"That's a deploy," mission specialist Don Thomas said as the \$330 million satellite and its \$110 million attached booster rocket sprang free at 3:55 p.m. EDT (10:55 GMT). 184 miles (296 kms) above the Pacific Ocean near Hawaii.

"Discovery, excellent job. Happy faces here," mission control's Tom Jones said in Houston.

About an hour later, the Boeing intertial upper stage fired automatically to propel the satellite toward its destination, a parking spot 22,000 miles (35,400 kms) over the Pacific.

The satellite and its booster phase deployed right on time. The tracking and data relay satellite... is on its way to its permanent orbital home," NASA commentator James Hartsfield said.

After the satellite deploy-

ment, the rest of the mission will be devoted to secondary experiments in biomedicine, physics, technology and military missile sensor development.

At the helm is Commander Tom Henricks, accompanied by co-pilot Kevin Kregel and mission specialists Don Thomas, Nancy Currie and Mary Ellen Weber.

NASA space controllers have switched to new, ultra-modern headquarters to monitor the Discovery's current mission.

"That old mission control centre is an icon. It's been a symbol for billions of people of humanity's pursuit in space," veteran astronaut Story Musgrave told the Discovery's crew as NASA was celebrating the move to the new \$250 million room late Thursday.

"The next 30 years, hopefully, will carry us just as far as the last 30 years did," Discovery commander Henricks replied.

The switch from the old Mission Control occurred three-and-a-half hours after Discovery deployed the \$330-million satellite that will replace the one that was destroyed in the Challenger explosion on Jan. 28, 1986, killing all seven astronauts on board.

PARIS (AFP) — Paloma Picasso is to divorce her husband of 17 years Argentine businessman Rafael Lopez Cambil. But the couple, who live in London but separated in January, are to remain friends and business partners, a statement said. "We will remain the best friends in the world," said the statement by Pablo Picasso's daughter, who is behind a range of jewellery and perfumes as well as other ventures. Pledging that they were "united by close links of friendship and trust," the statement said they would "remain associated on an equal basis in all their business affairs." In particular they are jointly behind ventures in fashion accessories and leather work.

Fellow passenger: Simpson upset, agitated, but still gave autograph

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Upset and agitated, O.J. Simpson sighed, asked for water and made phone calls seeking information about his ex-wife's death as he flew home from Chicago, a fellow passenger testified.

But even in his distress, witness Mark Partridge said Thursday, Simpson was the consummate celebrity, obliging a fan with an autograph on a cocktail napkin.

"I thought, 'what a nice man this was to be doing this,' having heard what I'd heard about the tragedy that was affecting his life," Mr. Partridge testified, hours after the defence sustained a stinging defeat in a ruling by the jury.

With the jury not present, Judge Lance Ito rejected a

defence bid to present a theory that Nicole Brown Simpson was mistakenly murdered by drug hitmen out to kill her cocaine-abusing friend Faye Resnick because she owed them money.

Mr. Partridge wrote an eight-page diary about the flight and gave it to attorneys for both sides, but not before copyrighting the document, he acknowledged.

Although Mr. Partridge, a trademark and patent lawyer, said Simpson confided in him and he was able to hear part of the ex-football star's many phone calls during the four-hour flight, the witness wasn't allowed to tell jurors what Simpson said because it was ruled hearsay.

When the men arrived in Los Angeles and Simpson

headed for the door, Mr. Partridge said, "he turned back and what I could see him say was, 'thank you.'"

Simpson, who had pleaded innocent to the killing his ex-wife and her friend Ronald Goldman on June 12, 1994, wiped tears from his eyes. Three of his attorneys patted him on the back. Several jurors stole glances in his direction. Mr. Partridge also seemed to choke up.

Both Mr. Partridge and Heriz Corp. executive Raymond Kilduff, who took Simpson to the airport in Chicago, described him as distraught and said they noticed a bleeding injury on the middle finger of his left hand. Simpson's lawyers say he cut his hand in his hotel room.

Exiles: Cuban patrol rammed U.S. protest boat

MIAMI (Agencies) — A Cuban patrol boat and a vessel carrying exiles collided off the Havana coast as a flotilla of powerboats from Florida commemorated the sinking of a refugee boat last year.

A Cuban exile group in Miami said a Cuban gunboat rammed the motor vessel Democracia in Cuban territorial waters about 10 miles from shore, crippling the boat and injuring three people. The U.S. Coast Guard said it was sending rescue ships to the area in response.

Cuba had said earlier Thursday it would do whatever was needed to keep the flotilla of Cuban exile powerboats from entering its waters.

About 100 members of the Florida exile community were aboard more than a dozen powerboats on the 80-mile (128-km) voyage from the Florida Keys to a site six miles (10-km) off Havana.

Organisers said they planned a peaceful protest in Cuban territorial waters to mark the anniversary of the sinking of a refugee boat last July, a disaster that helped trigger a massive exodus of Cuban rafters.

Dramatic television video showed the Cuban patrol boat and the exile vessel colliding. Witnesses said the Cuban ship had pulled alongside and then steered into the "Democracia. On board was

a Dade County commissioner, Pedro Reboredo, who was injured along with two others, the exile group said.

"The Democracia was rammed by two Cuban gunboats," said Maggie Chuss, a spokeswoman for the exile group Brothers To The Rescue. "I understand there is several people hurt, at least three. The boat is taking on water."

Cuban Foreign Ministry spokesman Rafael Dausa Thursday said protest organisers were trying to disrupt already difficult relations between Cuba and the United States.

"Cuba has the right to take, and will take, every measure to prevent any intrusion into our waters," Mr. Dausa told Reuters. "This anti-Cuban adventure does not worry us."

The group had planned to lay wreaths in a tribute to those who died in the sinking of the tugboat, 13 De Marzo, last July 13. The tragedy, believed to have taken about 40 lives, has become a rallying cry for exile protests.

The refugee flow that began in early summer became a flood by August. In all, more than 37,000 Cubans fled the island last year, most ending up in refugee camps at the U.S. Navy base at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

In Washington, D.C., about 50 exiles demonstrated in

front of the Cuban diplomatic office Thursday, carrying white caskets representing the children who perished in the sinking. Ten demonstrators were arrested by the U.S. Secret Service, including Cuban writer Armando Valladares.

Although Cuba has denied it, exiles claim the tugboat, stolen by a group of refugees trying to flee their Communist-ruled homeland, sank after being deliberately rammed and sprayed with high-pressure water hoses by Cuban pursuers.

"It was a massacre," said Humberto Sanchez, a flotilla organiser.

In Havana, Cuba's Union of Young Communists (Unión de Jóvenes Comunistas-UJC) had organised a summer festival to start Thursday on the capital's Malecon waterfront promenade, which looks out onto the waters of the Florida Straits.

Police closed off large sections of the Malecon to traffic and appeared to have increased the number of officers on duty.

Meanwhile, the U.S. government's first detailed reaction to Cuba's plans to finish building a Russian technology nuclear plant just 144 kilometres from U.S. shores came Thursday as a surge of concern.

Hugh Grant: Prostitute episode was disloyal

LOS ANGELES (R) — British movie star Hugh Grant continued his U.S. round of public mea culpas Wednesday, saying he had been disloyal to his longtime girlfriend Elizabeth Hurley with his encounter with a Hollywood prostitute. "I am very sorry," the star of Four Weddings and A Funeral said on the nationally televised Larry King Live talk show on Cable News Network. Grant pleaded no contest Tuesday to charge of having sex with a prostitute he picked up on Hollywood's famed Sunset Boulevard last month. He was fined \$1,800 and ordered to take a course on the danger of AIDS. Asked about the midnight episode by King, Grant responded, "I don't have excuses... and I'm very sorry." He said it was difficult to say why he did what he did, and that to use excuses offered by various people, such as stress and pressure, "would be a bit false." "In the end you have to come clear and say it was disloyal and shabby and selfish," he added. Grant's shame fuelled speculation on both sides of the Atlantic that Hurley, an English beauty who is one of the world's top models and the "new face" of Estee Lauder cosmetics, had ditched him over the incident after an eight-year relationship. But Grant insisted he and Hurley were still together, at least for now. "We're together, yeah. I can't say everything's going to be rosy. Only time will tell. The wounds are still relatively fresh," he said.

Paloma Picasso to divorce

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George Michael settles row with Sony

LONDON (AFP) — The British pop singer George Michael settled his one-year legal row with the Japanese Sony record company and signed a contract with Virgin, owned by Thorn-EMI, a Virgin spokesman announced.

The 32-year-old pop singer, who has sold millions of albums worldwide since starting out as a member of the Wham! group, declined to reveal the terms of his release from Sony or the details of his new contract with Virgin.

Jeremy Silver, a Virgin spokesman, said that Michael would be producing his first new album in 12 months' time and that the pop singer's contract covered the whole world except North America, where Michael has signed with Dreamworks SKG. Dreamworks SKG is a new record label co-owned by three Hollywood figures, film-director Steven Spielberg, music producer David Geffen and Jeffrey Katzenberg, formerly from Walt Disney.

As one of the most famous singers worldwide in recent years, Michael's earnings through these new contracts are likely to total tens of millions of dollars.

Bridge over the sea to Skye completed

LONDON (R) — Engineers Friday made a famous Scottish ballad come true — with a giant new bridge "over the sea to Skye." The £30 million (\$48 million) bridge linking the western island, a favourite tourist destination, to the Scottish mainland has been dogged by controversy, with islanders fearing it will wipe out dozens of jobs on the ferry and complaining the tolls are too high. But Sir Iain Noble, chairman of Skye Bridge Ltd that was lowering the last 100-tonne section into place Friday, defended the toll costs for the bridge and said people should start "blessing it rather than bashing it." The bridge is 570 metres long.

Seoul mayor warns of more disasters

SEOUL (AFP) — Rescuers sitting through the rubble of what used to be a posh shopping centre here dug out 18 more bodies Friday, bringing the confirmed death toll in the June 29 collapse to 281. More than 360 were still on the missing list.

Seoul City Mayor Cho Soon, meanwhile publicly apologised over the shocking bungle in the count of the missing in the collapse, and warned that more disasters could be waiting to happen.

"In reality, we cannot exclude the possibility that a similar disaster might occur," he said, adding that so many buildings in Seoul had been hurriedly built during rapid industrialisation in the 1970s and 1980s that many had "structural problems."

"I, as the elected mayor of Seoul, deeply apologise for letting this error happen, arousing suspicions among the people and increasing mistrust (in the city government)," Mr. Cho said at a meeting with journalists.

Mr. Cho, running on the ticket of the main opposition Democratic Party, was elected Seoul mayor in the first local elections in 34 years: on June 27, two days before the disaster.

Seoul city officials Thursday suddenly almost doubled the number of missing in the collapsed to 409 after finding another 203 missing in a separate list filed by district officials.

They later cut down the number to 394 after taking out 11 who had already been counted as confirmed dead and four others who had been counted twice or had reappeared.

On Friday, the number of missing decreased further to 367, but this figure probably included several people whose disappearance might have nothing to do with the disaster, officials said.

Prosecutors, meanwhile, questioned a district office head "about the details surrounding his approval" of the modification of the ill-fated Sampong Department Store building.

The official, Cho Nam-Il, approved the store's plan to convert warehouse facilities on the first basement floor into sales space in August 1994, which contributed to the weakening of the five-story structure.

Prosecutors also investigated five officials from the Socho District Office, two Seoul City officials and four Sampong executives to see if kickbacks were offered to Mr. Cho, a spokesman said.

Earlier this week, the prosecution arrested two former chiefs of the Socho District Office on charges of taking some \$15,000 each from Sampong in return for overlooking irregularities and modifications.

The mayor blamed the old habit of withholding everything from the public, nurtured among city officials during past military governments.

He also cited the lack of coordination between the headquarters and a district office, which had filed a separate list of the missing.

Philippines accepts U.S. autopsy findings on maid

MANILA (R) — The Philippines, saying it wanted to put behind it a controversy with Singapore over the hanging of a Filipino maid, Friday accepted key findings in the case by U.S. forensic experts.

Foreign Undersecretary Rodolfo Severino said Manila accepted the U.S. findings that confirmed murder victim Della Maga died by manual strangulation.

The U.S. result endorses the original Singapore findings that formed part of the prosecution's case against Flor Contemplacion, hanged in Singapore's Changi Prison in March after confessing to killing Maga and a Singaporean boy.

Mr. Severino told a news conference the Philippine government was satisfied with the results of the U.S. forensic examination of Maga's skeletal remains and accepted them as final.

Asked if the government was prepared to normalise relations with Singapore, Severino said: "We have been on the road to normalisation and this is in the interest of both countries."

The examination of Maga's remains by three American scientists was done to resolve conflicting findings of Philippine and Singaporean experts on the cause of her death.

Contemplacion's execution for the murder set off angry protests in the Philippines, where many felt she was innocent.

Relations between the two Asian neighbours had been strained since the hanging. President Fidel Ramos withdrew the Philippine ambassador to Singapore and threatened to sever diplomatic ties completely if it was found that Contemplacion was unjustly hanged. He also

set up an independent commission to investigate the case.

Scientists from the Philippines National Bureau of Investigation agreed with Singaporean findings that Maga was strangled but said she suffered other injuries that suggested she might have been killed by a man.

Mr. Severino said the third party panel of U.S. experts concluded Maga died of strangulation and that stains in the skull and scapulae were caused by post-mortem discoloration and decomposition.

"The Philippine government is satisfied that the... (panel) has answered all the questions that it was requested to consider by both countries," Mr. Severino said in a statement. "The Philippine government accepts as final the findings..."

Mr. Severino said he hoped the controversy would be put to rest.

"I think we should learn the lessons derived from this and leave the bitter feelings behind us. We have to get on with our lives," he told reporters.

Singapore Friday welcomed the U.S. panel's report upholding the city state's findings the murder case.

"The Third-Party Panel has unequivocally and unanimously upheld the findings of the Singapore pathologists," the Singapore Foreign Ministry said in a press statement Friday.

"The Singapore government accepts the Third-Party Panel's findings, which have resolved with finality the differences in findings between the Singapore pathologists and the (Philippine) experts on the cause of Della Maga's death," it added.

Nigeria frees some coup suspects

LAGOS (R) — Nigeria's military government has released several people who have faced a secret trial on charges of plotting a coup and has lifted a ban on a newspaper closed last year, newspapers reported Friday.

This Friday said politicians Adisa Akinloye, Titi Ajanaku, Abba Muazu and some other detainees were released Thursday after they had appeared before the tribunal trying more than 20 officers and civilians accused of plotting to topple military ruler General Sani Abacha in March.

The Nigerian Tribune newspaper said the fate of the others on trial might be announced at a news conference called by Defence headquarters for later Friday.

Mr. Akinloye and Ms. Ajanaku are political associates of former military ruler General Olusegun Obasanjo. He and his ex-deputy Major-General Shehu Musa Yar'adua are believed to be among the defendants in the secret trial which began in Lagos on June 5.

The authorities have been silent on the trial but local and foreign newspapers say some of the officers have been sentenced to death. Gen. Obasanjo has been given a 25-year jail term and Gen. Yar'adua a life sentence.

Nigeria has been in crisis since a previous military ruler annulled a 1993 presidential election in 1993. The undeclared winner, Moshod Abiola, has been in detention since June 1994 on treason charges for proclaiming himself president. Gen. Abacha seized power in November 1993.

U.S. warns guerrillas may strike in S. America

WASHINGTON (R) — The United States has received information that "Middle Eastern terrorists" may be planning to attack a U.S. target somewhere in South America this month, the State Department has announced.

The unusual public announcement gave no further details, and spokesmen for the department said they could add little.

"The United States government has information that Middle Eastern terrorists may be planning an attack against an unspecified U.S. target in South America during July 1995."

Additional information will be provided as it becomes available, "was all the announcement said.

State Department spokesman David Johnson said the information related to an attack south of the Panama-Colombia border, thus excluding Central America and Mexico. But he said it was not known in which country the attack might come.

"We are unable to exclude any form of terrorism," Mr. Johnson said, adding that if it happened it could be directed against U.S. institutions or individuals.

"We are urging U.S. citizens (in South America) to be alert and to be cautious during the remainder of the month of July," Mr. Johnson

said. He said the announcement was not a travel advisory telling Americans not to go to the region.

Mr. Johnson said the announcement had been made under a "no double standards" policy of making public intelligence information that could affect the safety of U.S. citizens.

The policy was introduced after the bombing of Pan Am Flight 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland, which killed 270 people in 1988. The U.S. government was criticised for having previously warned its diplomats, but not the general public, that a U.S. airliner could be threatened.

More recently, Washington issued an alert throughout the Far East after a bomb attack last December on a Philippine Airlines plane killed a Japanese national.

The attack was blamed on Muslim guerrillas who had sneaked into the Philippines and were believed involved in a plot to kill Pope John Paul during his trip to Manila and to bomb several U.S. commercial aircraft.

Philippine authorities have accused Ramzi Ahmad Yousef, now facing trial in New York over a 1993 bomb attack on the World Trade Centre, of being behind the plot. U.S. officials could not say Thursday whether the latest warning was linked with that case.

U.S. warns guerrillas

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Karachi Residents pass a burning bus, which was set ablaze by a group of armed men in the troubled area of the strife-torn city as at least eight people were shot dead and

several others were injured during clashes by powerful ethnic-based Mohajir Qaumi Movement (MQM) and the police (AFP photo)

Hundreds attend funeral of 5 killed in Karachi

KARACHI (AFP) — Hundreds of workers and supporters of a powerful ethnic group thronged Karachi's industrial district Friday for the funeral of five people killed in a gun battle with security forces, residents said.

Thursday when police ordered them to vacate the house in suburban Korangi, officials said. Five militants and a policeman were killed in the exchange of gunfire.

In a statement from London, self-exiled MQM leader Altaf Hussain blamed security forces for the killings.

Residents said hundreds of emotional MQM workers and supporters turned out for the funeral. Sporadic gunfire was heard in the area but no casualties were reported.

Prime Minister Benazir

Bhutto's government has blamed the MQM for much of the violence in Karachi, where some 2,000 people have died in political and religious troubles in the past 18 months.

MQM represents a large Urdu-speaking community which migrated here after the 1947 partition of the subcontinent. The group denies involvement in terrorism and accuses the government of victimising the settlers.

The group and the government are involved in talks aimed at ending the violence with the third round to commence here Sunday.

MQM has put forward 18 demands, including quotas for the community in government jobs and the police force and the withdrawal of criminal cases against MQM members.

The government proposed 21 counter demands, asking the MQM to close its "training camps in India" and to publicly denounce violence, officials said. The party denies foreign backing of its movement.

Heavy battles rage in Sri Lanka, rebels down plane

COLOMBO (AFP) — Heavy gun-battles raged in northern Sri Lanka Friday as Tamil Tiger guerrillas shot down an aircraft and raided an army defence line, leaving up to 100 soldiers and rebels killed, officials said.

The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) scored a direct hit on a twin-engine Argentinian-built Pucara as it climbed after a bombing mission to support the ground troops resisting the rebel assault, the military said.

Details were sketchy of the 10-hour close-quarter hand-to-hand battle but defence officials said an almost equal number of Tigers and rebels may have been killed making up a total of "about 100."

Another 42 soldiers were wounded in the pre-dawn attack and evacuated to a hospital in the north as air-force jets bombed the suspected anti-aircraft gun positions of the rebels, military

spokesman Sarath Munasinghe said.

He said the Pucara aircraft piloted by a single airman was supporting ground troops to beat off the simultaneous assault carried out by 500 to 600 LTTE fighters when he was hit by a surface-to-air missile.

"The Pucara was carrying a steep climb after diving to bomb target," the spokesman said adding that air operations continued despite the setback to the airforce.

The wreckage fell behind army lines in a 78-square kilometre (31-square-mile) area captured from the Tamil Tigers after Operation Leap Forward was launched Sunday inside the LTTE stronghold of the Jaffna peninsula.

Following Friday's Tiger penetration of the defences, the army strengthened its bunkers just six kilometres away from the psychologically important Jaffna town, the

Irish premier holds surprise talks with Adams, Hume

DUBLIN (R) — Irish Prime Minister John Bruton had unscheduled talks Friday with Sinn Fein President Gerry Adams and moderate nationalist John Hume to try to break a deadlock in Northern Ireland's peace process.

Irish officials said Foreign Minister Dick Spring, another key player in moves to forge a lasting settlement for the British province, discussed the stalemate.

The peace process is stalled over British demands that Sinn Fein get the Irish Republican Army (IRA), which declared a ceasefire 10 months ago after 25 years of battle, to decommission its

arsenals before it can join all-party talks.

Mr. Adams earlier accused Britain of creating a wave of street protests in Northern Ireland by refusing to negotiate with his party until its IRA guerrilla backers surrendered their arms.

Against a background of nightly violence after 10 months of peace, the Sinn Fein president said in an article in the Irish Times that Britain's intransigence over IRA arms was dangerous.

"It is, in fact, forcing politics back on to the street," said Mr. Adams, whose party — the IRA's political wing — seeks to end British rule of Northern Ireland.

Firebombs were thrown in Catholic areas of Belfast during the night, the latest incident in a wave of unrest that erupted after Britain released a soldier who was jailed for life for shooting dead a Catholic teenager while on patrol.

No shots have been fired in the province since last year's ceasefires by the IRA and its pro-British "loyalist" foes, but the demonstrations have worrying echoes of the start of Northern Ireland's "Troubles" in 1969.

Civil unrest by the Catholic minority and Protestant majority deteriorated into a guerrilla war which killed 3,200 and turned the pro-

Japan campaign brings out the beast in Kaifu

HAMAMATSU, Japan (R) — Japan's top-guy former Prime Minister Toshiki Kaifu swapped his smile for a snarl Friday to fight for his candidacy in a ruling-party stronghold on Japan's Pacific seaboard.

Mr. Kaifu took his New Frontier Party's (NFP) calls for drastic reform to Shizuoka prefecture, a district 200 kilometres west of Tokyo, where the conservative culture of tea and fruit farmers clashes with high-technology manufacturers.

The NFP president, one of Japan's most popular prime ministers during his 1989 to 1991 term, had logged over 7,300 kilometres as of Friday in a gruelling campaign for July 23 elections, the first nationwide poll since 1993.

The elections to fill half the 252 seats of the Upper House of parliament "poses the question of whether Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama's government should be allowed to continue," Mr. Kaifu told reporters.

"Every step we take is with

the aim of putting an end to the Murayama administration," he said.

Mr. Kaifu, dubbed "Mr. Clean" for a Quixotic reform programme he began in the dirtiest days of Japanese politics, has a potent mixture of policy, party and personal reasons to take aim at the current government.

The Socialist Murayama heads a coalition government with the long-ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), the party that first elevated him from obscurity and then dumped Mr. Kaifu as prime minister in 1991 at the height of his popularity.

Those two largest members of Mr. Murayama's coalition, Mr. Kaifu reminded Shizuoka voters, for decades fought pitched battles for their vote before joining hands in June, 1994, in an awkward left-right alliance.

"They overcome their fundamental policy differences through easy compromises and can't achieve significant reform because they spend all their energy just staying in power," Mr. Kaifu said.

The aggressive tone of the 63-year-old Kaifu, dropped as prime minister by the LDP because he pushed too hard for reform of Japan's scandal-ridden politics, surprised listeners who had thought of him as clean and likable but ineffectual.

"I'm encouraged because he really seems to be determined to make things happen," said businessman Yoshihiko Hakamata, one of 1,000 people who stopped to hear Mr. Kaifu on the stump.

Earlier in the week, a senior NFP official told the news media he thought his party lacked the will and energy to do its opposition duty and topple the unpopular Murayama government.

The NFP, formed last December from nine smaller parties, has had to fight to keep together its unwieldy group of Buddhists, conservatives, trade unionists and young reformists.

But Mr. Kaifu, lobbying for local candidate Masataka Suzuki against incumbents

Yeltsin sets Dec. 17 date for parliamentary elections

MOSCOW (R) — President Boris Yeltsin Friday set Dec. 17 as the date for new elections to Russia's lower house of parliament, removing lingering doubts that they could be postponed.

Mr. Yeltsin, 64, gave the firm date for State Duma elections in a decree apparently issued from the Moscow hospital where he has been recovering from a heart problem since Tuesday.

Opposition parties, some of whose leaders had alleged that Mr. Yeltsin secretly planned to put off the election, welcomed the announcement and began girding themselves for the contest.

"Passions will now subside about whether the elections are to be held or not and that is the most important thing," Duma Chairman Ivan Rybkin told reporters.

The last election to the Duma was held on Dec. 12, 1993, when the 450 deputies were elected for only a two-year term following the dissolution of the previous parliament by Mr. Yeltsin.

Under election law, Mr. Yeltsin could have left declaring the December State Duma poll date until mid-August.

His early announcement served to demonstrate he was still firmly in control despite

his illness. Some opposition figures have used his health problems to renew charges that he is not physically fit.

The decree, however, failed to clear up how and when the smaller Federation Council (upper house) would be elected.

The Duma wants the upper chamber to be elected by popular vote as it was in 1993. But the Federation Council itself and some Kremlin officials want a House composed of regional delegates appointed by the Kremlin and regional bodies without election.

The Duma elected in December will serve for a full four-year term, unlike the present transitional one.

Real power lies in the hands of the president. But Mr. Yeltsin, whose term expires in June 1996, will all the same be hoping the elections will produce a less hostile Duma than the current one.

Bristling with Communists, Agrarians and ultranationalists, it has criticised Mr. Yeltsin and the government of Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin relentlessly over economic policy and the Chechnya conflict.

But Mr. Yeltsin failed last month in an attempt to modify a key election law that would have lessened the chances of extremist parties

Chechen peace talks postponed for a day

MOSCOW (R) — Peace talks due to resume in Chechnya's capital Grozny Friday have been postponed for the day, chief mediator Sandor Meszaros said.

ITAR-TASS news agency quoted Mr. Meszaros, head of an Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe delegation which is hosting the talks, as saying negotiations would not resume Friday. He gave no reason for the delay and did not say when they would be resumed.

Russian News Agency (RIA) said rebel negotiators, who went into Chechnya's southern mountains to con-

sult separatist leader Dzhokhar Dudayev on a draft final document, did not show up for the talks which were scheduled to resume in Grozny at 4 p.m. (1200 GMT).

Peace talks had been due to restart in the afternoon after a day's break, in which rebel negotiators went to consult their leaders and Moscow's delegates considered their views on a draft final document.

RIA said chief Chechen negotiator Usman Imaev had gone into the mountains to talk over the draft with rebel commanders.

The agency gave no reason for the delay in the peace talks, which started last month in earnest after a Chechen hostage-taking raid on a southern Russian town.

Negotiators from both sides have sent conflicting signals since Monday on hopes of resolving political disputes, the most difficult of which is breakaway Chechnya's constitutional status.

Russian Interior Minister Anatoly Kulikov, who is taking part in the talks, told RIA Thursday he believed Mr. Imaev had gone into the mountains to try to convince rebel commanders to accept

Burma dissident willing to meet with junta

RANGOON (AFP) — Opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi said Friday that she was willing to negotiate with Burma's ruling junta, but appealed to the world community to wait before rushing into the country with development aid.

"There is no way we can achieve reconciliation unless we talk with each other," she told a packed news conference at her lakeside home, adding that any contacts with the junta "would come firstly in the form of dialogue."

But she also urged nations and world institutions not to rush in and offer Burma development aid before assessing the country's political situation.

"It is too soon to rush into anything," she said, adding that potential donors "should wait and see whether there is a genuine move towards reconciliation and a democratic system of government."

"I have been released. That is all. Nothing else has changed," she said.

Ms. Suu Kyi said that while she was willing to meet with the junta, any contact could only occur following discussions with her colleagues in the National League for Democracy (NLD), who she has met daily since her release from house arrest.

"We have every intention of asking the SLORC for a meeting, but only after we have decided how we wish to proceed," she said, referring to the State Law and Order Restoration Council, as the junta is officially known.

She said earlier this week that she would be willing to compromise and that all sides had to be flexible if they were to bring democracy to Burma. But she added that she has not had any contact with the SLORC since her release.

Ms. Aung San Suu Kyi said that she and her NLD colleagues had not yet discussed whether they would make the further release of political prisoners a pre-condition for talks with the SLORC.

Ms. Suu Kyi added that the SLORC, which seized power in 1988, has recently negotiated ceasefire agreements with most of the armed ethnic groups that have been fighting Rangoon for more autonomy since independence in 1948.

"But a ceasefire is not a permanent peace," she



Burmese leading opposition politician Aung San Suu Kyi shares a laugh with U Kyau Maung (left), acting head of the opposition National League for Democracy (NLD) after she was released from her house arrest nearly six years ago (AFP photo)

added, "What we want is permanent peace."

She declined to discuss here meetings last year with SLORC leaders Gen. Than Shwe and Gen. Khin Nyunt, saying they had agreed at her request not to make public any details to avoid misunderstandings.

But she said she found Gen. Khin Nyunt to be polite and "quite charming," and that Gen. Than Shwe was "straightforward."

Ms. Suu Kyi has been meeting at length with other NLD leaders since her release Monday from six years of house arrest. She declined to give details of their discussions.

Ms. Suu Kyi co-founded the NLD in 1989 and campaigned widely for the party ahead of elections that the NLD swept in April 1990.

The SLORC subsequently ignored the poll results and refused to relinquish power. Instead it clamped down on the opposition, arresting top NLD leaders and forcing others to flee to the jungle or across the border into Thailand.

Now, she said, the NLD was not trying to rebuild the party the way it was.

"We don't want the NLD to be just exactly the way it was in 1989, we want it to be what the NLD ought to be in 1995," she said without elaborating.

Asked about the national convention drafting Burma's new constitution, she reiterated that she still had reserva-

tion between the person and the deed, because all of us have weaknesses."

"I don't think it's vengeance that people should want," Ms. Suu Kyi said. "I think what they should work for is the truth."

In another interview published Friday in London's Daily Telegraph, the opposition leader said she bore no ill-will towards the military regime that held her under house arrest.

"I truly feel no ill-will towards my captors. This is not just something I'm saying to be tactful or diplomatic. I myself sometimes wonder why that is."

She said she had concluded it was partly because she associated the Burmese army with her father, Aung San, who secured Burma's independence from Britain.

"Most of my photos show my father in uniform so I grew up thinking of the army as part of the family."

Ms. Suu Kyi also said the conditions of her detention were quite tolerable.

"I have to confess that I really did not find it very difficult to be on my own. Of course, I missed my family and my colleagues, but I tried not to think about that. I knew there were people suffering much more than me."

She added, "I had my radio and my books. I know my colleagues in prison had neither and were going through a much more difficult time."

Jordan Times

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Hopes rekindled

THE VISIT of President Ali Abdullah of Jordan exemplifies the excellent relationship between the Yemeni and Jordanian leaderships and peoples. The record of the two countries relations throughout the past decade offers an ideal model of dependable and friendly ties. The warm, stable and principled personal relations between His Majesty King Hussein and President Saleh withstood many challenges. Jordanian-Yemeni relationships remained cordial, solid and constructive at all times. This is the kind of Arab-Arab relations that we would like to see developing between all the Arab nations without exception.

All Arab monarchs and presidents are in need of the need to forge firm Arab relationships, but not much of that talk has ever been translated into deeds. Contacts between the Arab countries remain strained and several confederations of Arab "leagues" have surfaced to give expression to this contemporary quintessentialism of Arab norm. Iraq and its people remain isolated and under siege not only by the outside world but also by the Arab Nation itself as if the Iraqis were not an integral part of the Arab world.

At a time when we are seeking to normalise relations with Israel and open our gates to its people for trade and commerce, the Arab frontiers must not remain sealed with Baghdad. Five years after the Gulf crisis erupted, fall-outs of that dark episode continue to strain inter-Arab relations. But with the good offices of leaders like President Saleh and the crown of King Hussein and King Fahd of Saudi Arabia we hope that soon we will see Arab relations restored to their pre-Gulf crisis norm.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

SULTAN AL HATTAB, a writer in Al Ra'i, condemned Turkey's repeated incursions into Iraq under the pretext of helping the Kurdish rebels. It is not possible for Turkey to expect the Kurdish population from their lands and stifle the spirit of their resistance and the rebellion in Kurdistan with one, two or tens of military offensives against the oppressed population, said the writer. Indeed, the Turks are unable to repress the Kurds who are fighting Ankara bravely in northern Iraq but in eastern Turkey and in Turkish cities and streets, and it is not the right of Turkey to annihilate the Kurds because they are fighting for their freedom, said the writer. Criticising the United States and the United Nations for condoning Turkey's invasion of Iraq territory, the writer said that when Iraq invaded Kuwait, Washington led a war on Baghdad but it is doing nothing against Turkey's repeated invasions of Iraq not only because it is an ally of the United States and the NATO alliance but because Turkey's invasion serves the purpose of the Western alliance, said the writer. As long as the Arab World is keeping silent about repeated Turkish invasions of northern Iraq and as long as the Arab states remain hostage to the will and orders of the United States, warned the writer, one could soon witness Turkey's troops settling permanently in northern Iraq under the pretext of quelling the alleged Kurdish raids on Turkish territory.

ANOTHER COLUMNIST in Al Ra'i, daily said it seems that the United States is determined to keep the sanctions clamped on the Iraqi people whether they destroyed their nuclear weapons or not. By repeatedly deciding to maintain the embargo on Iraq, the United Nations, which is supposed to come to the help of the oppressed nations and people is a party to the murder of a whole nation, said Mahmud Rimawi. Since Baghdad has implemented the U.N. resolutions, pulled out its forces from Kuwait, recognised the international boundaries with the Gulf state and expressed the desire to fully cooperate with the world community, there can be no reason for maintaining the sanctions on the Iraqi people, said the writer.

Jordanian Perspective

Democracy digging deeper roots

THE MUNICIPAL elections that Jordan held last week were another landmark in the democratisation and political pluralism in the Kingdom. Granted there were a few nuances, but in general the conduct of the elections and the way the government went around organising them showed that Jordan is a fast learner and a bright student of political evolution.

It was indeed another feather in the cap of Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker, who also oversaw the Kingdom's first general elections in 1989 after a hiatus of more than three decades.

It is highly noteworthy that it was mostly apolitical candidates who won the majority of seats in the municipal elections, and it would be naive to characterise them as anything but ordinary Jordanians from the heart of the Kingdom who will, hopefully, strive to serve their communities.

At least six political parties ran publicly announced candidates while other parties chose to keep the identities of their nominees secret. The final results, however, showed that candidates of political parties had won only a negligible share of the seats. This indicates that Jordanians are shying away from embracing political parties, as the main vehicle in their mainstream life regardless of their political ideologies. This is not surprising also, because less than two per cent of the electorate are registered members of political parties although the new Political Parties Law was enacted almost three years ago.

It was regrettable that the Islamic Action Front (IAF), the best organised political party in Jordan, chose to withdraw from the municipal races in its strongholds of Zarqa and Russeifa. An IAF victory in those two municipalities would not have posed a challenge for anyone. If anything, the track record of the previous IAF-dominated council in Zarqa stands far above others in Jordan in terms of services to the community. It was under this council that Zarqa had its first university, three community colleges, 12 schools and dozens of Zakat committees which served the poor among Zarqa residents. Furthermore, it was under the IAF-led council that Zarqa Municipality settled its public debts. In fact, the Zarqa council under the IAF set a model for most other municipalities in Jordan. For sure, we can expect to see a similar record in Madaba and Karak where the IAF won this

time around.

An additional 10 IAF members joining the 3,000-plus municipal officials throughout the Kingdom would not have upset the overall balance in local administrative powers.

The arrest of drivers who were apparently taking IAF voters to polling centres on charges of silly traffic violations in Zarqa was rather uncalled for. Such actions obviously alienated the IAF, which, already unhappy with what it saw as other moves aimed at undermining its chances in the elections, registered a strong protest by boycotting Wednesday's session of the Lower House of Parliament.

Alienating the well organised political party in the Kingdom, regardless of its beliefs and ideology, does not go well with the democratisation process. The IAF is very much part and parcel of our political life. IAF leaders and supporters are very much from among us, and there is no reason for them to feel alienated from mainstream life. Such alienation would only mar prospects for a harmonious relationship between political parties and the regime.

That was perhaps the only blemish in the nationwide municipal elections apart from what was unmistakably voter apathy. On the second count, the government did its best to attract voters to the polling booths, but it cannot do anything beyond reminding voters of their duty towards themselves and towards the community that they belong to. It is here that one would have expected the political parties to play a key and influential role by convincing the voters to leave their homes and spend a couple of hours on a public holiday to vote for who could serve their community best.

Effectively, the low turnout on Tuesday and Wednesday meant that Jordanians need more orientation on their rights and responsibilities as well as a conviction that it is largely up to them to decide the level and quality of services for their communities because they have the power to elect the candidates they feel are best suited to serve them. Complaining that previous councils did not serve the communities well is not an answer or justification for staying away from the elections. If anything, such a complaint should be much more the key reason for the voters to seek to rectify the situation.

By Dr. Musa Keilani

THE WEEK IN PRINT

New councils should serve communities

By Elia Nasrallah

THE LOCAL Arabic daily last week tackled the municipal elections, other domestic affairs, the situation in Iraq and Arab affairs as well as the Middle East question in light of Israeli practices.

Congratulating the winners in the municipal elections in the past week, Al Aswaq daily said that now that they assumed new positions, the municipal council members and the mayors should realise the heavy responsibility they shoulder towards their local communities. Since the first moment the elected council members will be the focus of attention of people who expect from them diligence and dedication in serving the local residents and in living up to expectations, said the daily. The paper said that the new councils are expected to help contribute to the success of the democratic process in Jordan.

Taher Al Adwan congratulated Iman Fteimat, the first woman mayor to be elected in Jordan, saying that her success reflects the Jordanian people's maturity and their determination to choose the best and more eligible people for shouldering the responsibility of municipal services.

But the writer said that it is to be regretted that elections are still influenced by clans and families in Jordan, something which could adversely affect the behaviour of some members of the municipal councils who tend to favour their own relatives in the course of their work. The writer said that to overcome this predicament, the Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs ought to merge small towns councils and widen the base of the electorate so as the public will have a wider choice of candidates and so that the best can only be chosen.

With the exception of the deputies of the Amman districts, most of Parliament members in various governorates were involved one way or another in the municipal elections, said Bassam Haddadin, a writer in Al Dustour. He said that this indicates that the municipal elections were politicised and the deputies hoped that their involvement in the local elections will boost their image and give them advantage in the coming parliamentary elections. The writer expressed the view that the political parties in Jordan have had little effect on the outcome of the municipal elections which were, to a large extent, dominated by tribal and families influence.

A columnist in Al Dustour supported the view of the government by saying that the municipal elections were fair and free without any intervention on the part of the government. The fact that some political groups did not achieve success in certain districts does not mean that the government had had its influence or intervened in a manner of serve these groups defeat but clearly indicates that the success came to many candidates as a result of tribal and family support, argued Mohammad Daoud.

The writer said that a study of the list of the candidates can clearly realise that most of the candidates had relied on the support of their families and their clans, especially in areas outside the capital.

A writer in Al Dustour said that most of the candidates who won the seats in the municipal councils did so depending on the support they received from their relatives and clans and family members and therefore candidates with not tribal clout had poor chance of succeeding though they could be far better qualified for the post. Mohammad Kawash said that in light of the circumstances, one can say that the elections were undemocratic because the voters were bound by family considerations to choose what they are told and not basing their decisions on reason. The writer said that the best way to deal with this predicament is to allow only half of the municipal council to be elected by the local residents leaving the

other half to be appointed by the government which was quite successful in choosing former committees to handle the affairs of the local councils in the past years.

A writer in Al Ra'i daily demanded that the government should try its best to rid the Kingdom of the guest workers and open the way for Jordanians to take up their place. Saying that the guest workers' jobs can be filled by the Jordanian job seekers in bakeries, restaurants and many other places, Tareq Masarweh said that the government must have realised by now this fact and also that the non-Jordanians, like those who wash cars in the streets, deprive the car wash stations of their income and that the service they claim they are doing is not up to the required standard in most of the jobs they fill. He said Japan, which needs workers for its industry, is resorting to robots to carry out the work while Israel's factories have related very limited numbers of Romanian and Bulgarian workers for a limited period of time but will get rid of them.

Fahd Al Faneh, a writer in Al Ra'i urged Parliament to speed up its review and endorsement of a package of tax laws so that they would be ready before the coming Amman summit in October. Blaming the government for delaying presentation of these laws to Parliament, the writer said that the Ministry of Finance should see to it that the law is ready before October when they will be discussed by the economic summit in Amman which is designed to help Jordan attract investments. The writer said that Jordan cannot face the world in October with the present obsolete laws and the government will have only itself to blame should Parliament fail to endorse the new laws in time.

Commenting on the announcement of the results of the Tawjili examinations, a writer in Al Dustour said that the school graduates and their parents are no doubt facing the question of what to do and what to study at the universities if their grades permit them. Mohammad Sgour said that apart from the financial concerns, the parents and their children will no doubt be at a loss as to what to study in college and to what would best meet the requirements of the local labour market. The writer called on the concerned authorities to try to steer the students towards what is more beneficial for the country and what would help the students find jobs after graduation. He said that the parents ought to refrain from forcing their children to take up university studies if the children do not feel they are inclined to do so and more importantly not to choose courses for which there is no demand in the labour market should they decide to continue their higher studies.

Commenting on the Turkish incursion into northern Iraq, Ma'an Biari, a writer in Al Ra'i, said that the Turkish raids are not only a flagrant violation of Iraq's sovereignty, but they also reflect that the fact the Turkish military has failed so far to crush the Kurdish rebellion. The writer said that the repeated incursions into Iraqi territory cannot end the rebellion; nor can it stifle the Kurds' voice demanding justice and legitimate rights. The writer said that claims on the part of the Western powers about support for people's human rights are forgotten in the case of Turkey as it represents the Kurdish population seeking basic human rights.

A writer in Al Ra'i said that the Western powers decision to maintain the embargo on Iraq is not justified by any standard as it is causing severe pain to the Iraqis and starving the country's population for no reason. Samir Qitami said that the Iraqi government has cooperated fully with the United Nations, destroyed the mass destruction weapons and showed total commitment to U.N. resolutions.



Egyptians look out for possible vice-president

By Jonathan Wright
Reuters

CAIRO — Vice-president or no vice-president? What is the question many Egyptians are asking in the wake of the Muslim militant attempt to assassinate President Hosni Mubarak in Addis Ababa last month.

When Mr. Mubarak told members of the armed forces this week that the days of one-man rule were over, it might have been a sign that a deputy was finally on the way, after 13 years without.

Not so, one government source said on Thursday. "He meant that there is the constitution and there are institutions and there is no need to worry," he said.

But worry is just what some foreign governments did in the three hours between the time gunmen opened fire at Mr. Mubarak's motorcade on June 26 and the time he appeared on television, safe and sound back in Cairo.

"My government was seriously concerned. They kept ringing up the embassy for confirmation he was alive and well," said a diplomat from a Middle East state which sees stability in Egypt as important to the future of the Middle East

peace process. "None of us have the faintest idea how long it would take a successor to find his feet," he added.

The Egyptian constitution does lay down procedures in case the president is killed or incapacitated.

The speaker of parliament would take over as acting head of state for up to 60 days and during that time he would have parliament nominate and vote on a successor. As in presidential elections, the choice then goes to a public referendum.

In the last two cases, when Gamal Abdul Nasser died in 1970 and Anwar Sadat was assassinated in 1981, a vice president was ready in the wings and the transition went smoothly.

Nasser often had up to three vice presidents, mostly glorified protocol officers, and Sadat groomed Mr. Mubarak as his successor for the six years from 1975 onwards.

But Mr. Mubarak has chosen not to name a deputy throughout his 13 years in office, apparently because he has not found anyone he thinks wholly fit for the job.

After the referendum that confirmed him for a third six-year term in office

in 1993, Mr. Mubarak told a Western newspaper that if he named a vice-president people would assume he had appointed a successor. He told an Arabic paper that he feared the country would split in two if he appointed a deputy.

The government source suggested the president was holding his cards close to his chest but speculated that he probably would not choose now to act.

"It's entirely up to the president. He can name one or more vice presidents but Egypt is not a monarchy and we don't want a crown prince. Look at what happened in Qatar," he added.

The old crown prince of Qatar, Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa Al Thani, deposed his father last month.

Although republic in form, the Egyptian state retains some features of the country's Pharaonic past, like awe in the face of authority and a bureaucratic approach to policy making.

Once the leader has appointed a successor, it becomes almost impossible to unseat him.

And, given the government's failure to let civilian politicians cultivate mass followings, the most likely successor to Mr. Mubarak will again be from the

armed forces, like Nasser, Sadat and Mr. Mubarak himself.

A pseudonymous article in the Washington-based Middle East Journal said the most obvious military successor, Defence Minister Mohammad Hussein Tantawi, was by no means a sure bet.

"The existence of competitive patronage networks within the officer corps... as well as Tantawi's limited popularity, have placed the higher circles of the general officer corps in a state of unease," added the article, apparently by someone with access to the Egyptian political elite and with detailed knowledge of the military.

"In the event of death... of the president, factionalism within the high command could be a serious problem... for the vital questions of presidential succession to be so relatively open, and the military backstop even to be in question, suggests the political fragility of the system," it added.

But the government source dismissed speculation that a succession could be messy. "The nature of the nation is that things take place very smoothly," he said.

Yemeni le

(Continued from page 1)

Parliament's committee on foreign and parliamentary affairs, Minister of State for Yemeni Affairs, Ali Abdullah Salim, said that the Yemeni government is determined to maintain the integrity of the country and to ensure the safety of its citizens. He said that the Yemeni government is also committed to the principles of democracy and human rights. The writer said that the repeated incursions into Iraqi territory cannot end the rebellion; nor can it stifle the Kurds' voice demanding justice and legitimate rights. The writer said that claims on the part of the Western powers about support for people's human rights are forgotten in the case of Turkey as it represents the Kurdish population seeking basic human rights.

TURSDAY, JULY 15, 1995
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Features



One of the houses in Dana before it was renovated



A JEWEL OF THE KINGDOM: The village of Dana (photos by Raouf Dabbas)

Ending Dana's centuries of oblivion — and none too soon

By Virginia Buchanan

ONE OF the latest fascinations in Jordan is the ancient village of Dana.

But that was not so in 1990 when the "Friends of Dana," consisting of Majida Mouasher, Maria Shih, Gabai Saifi, Rabiha Ayyoub, Nihaya Saifi, Gulo Sati, Nadia Nabulsi, Nuha Jume'an, Muna Zawaydeh, Iman Shukri and Dumia Sarraf — adopted the village.

Long lost in history, Dana has been sunning itself in various guises through the millenniums, on the jutting edge of one of the most scenic and isolated gorges in the Middle East — Wadi Dana. Because it lies about 60 kilometres north of Petra in the Sharah mountains, off the beaten track and out of sight in rugged country, relatively few people had seen, or heard, of it.

However, Dana's centuries of oblivion were numbered, and none to soon, for it was literally falling apart. The stone houses, built and rebuilt on foundations constructed back through Islamic, Byzantine, Roman, Greek and Edomite eras, had crumbled in or tumbled out with age. Alleys were blocked by piles of stone and debris. Water was cut off. The pristine springs that had given life to this desert oasis, and the channels carrying their water to the hillside fields and terraced gardens, were clogged by dense brambles. Fruit trees were drying up, while water wasted down incised, ruining other crops by over-soaking. The wildlife and flora of Wadi Dana canyon below were becoming endangered from over-hunting and over-grazing.

Numerous villagers had already moved out, deserting the village that had seemed to desert them, and began creating a new one, Qadisiyah, up on the plateau where they could start over.

Aged Dana was breathing its last. In November 1990, during the turmoil leading to the Gulf war, when people in neighbouring countries were in desperate need, Majida Mouasher, Maria Shih, and Gabi Saifi first met while working in Amman with various relief organisations to help them. Jordan was reeling from the arrival of masses of refugees, compounded by political and financial cut-offs. The three women, discovering that they had similar ideals and enjoyed working together, felt inspired to do something special, on their own, for Jordan. "Something big, worthwhile and long-lasting — like adopting a whole village."

"Maybe that was being too ambitious," says Majida, "but when you believe in something, it has to happen." When she mentioned their dreams to her uncle, Anis Mouasher, he suggested the little-known village of Dana. An avid explorer of Jordan's wilderness, he had first glimpsed Dana in 1952, and years later was instrumental, as president and founder of the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature (RSCN), in preserving 228 square kilometres of the Wadi Dana area as a nature reserve. Building nature reserves, however, means limiting the local inhabitants' income and preventing their activities.

The idea behind the Dana project was not only

to establish and develop the reserve, but to promote conservation, make it popular locally and nationally, and to integrate it with the economic development of local resources to benefit those in and around the reserve — so that each facet complements the other.

Dana, bordering the reserve, was one of the last living intact and unspoiled traditional villages left in Jordan. With its rich heritage and superb scenic value, the village had strong potential for tourism — if it could be rescued while still alive.

Where the Friends of Dana came in. The village was the people's greatest resource.

"We hesitated," says one, "afraid that would be too much for us, but we at least drove down for a look. And instantly fell in love — as everyone does — not only with the village, but with the whole stunning scenic area around it." Dana's plight affected them deeply. They couldn't sleep that night, knowing that only 2½ hours from Amman people were living without even the basic services of civilisation — no adequate roads, no shelter, no sanitation or nearby water — and scant income. The women felt they should be more responsible to their own people. If they adopted the village and helped build new roofs over head, the villagers would have more incentive to stay in Dana and keep the labyrinth of dwellings a live model of an 18th century Jordanian village. While preserving this jewel of the Kingdom the villagers could become self-sufficient by selling local produce and native handicrafts to sight-seers.

"Yes! we accept the challenge."

The women thought of other friends who could work with them. By December, 1990, 11 dedicated members organised, naming, themselves the "Friends of Dana." No officers, no letterheads, no salaries, no rent. Monthly dues were donated to the "kitty." What had to be bought or hired would be paid from either the kitty, their own pockets, or fund-raising.

To practise fund-raising, they started with small private functions in their homes, then with growing confidence went on to public events — a children's Easter egg hunt at a country stable took immense effort (not to mention colouring 310 eggs and baking 20 cakes), but was an exhilarating success.

"Since then we must have used every legal way to raise fund," says Gabi, speaking for them all. "We have sponsored concerts, famous singers, fashion shows, Christmas bazaars, dinners and bake sales. We've sold tickets to countless events. We've sold thousands of T-shirts. And thousands of calendars to individuals and in bulk to businesses to use as gifts for special occasions. We think money all the time."

Meanwhile, back at the village, the Friends of Dana had launched phase one: "Restore 20 houses." They made a survey of the 300 remaining villagers to determine the neediest. First was an elderly widow, Tamam, living alone in a dilapidated house. Consulting with architect Ammar Khammash, the Friends of Dana bought paint, plaster and cement, employed a contractor and an engineer to hire and supervise. He

was to hire local villagers only and pay the going wage. He did, and the restoration was on its way.

At times the labourers' pay exceeded the actual work accomplished, but it was money well-spent, getting them involved in earning and learning as they worked on their own houses. They had to dismantle some dwellings completely, stone by stone, and rebuild them. They smoothed and plastered walls. They laid new reeds over the old juniper log beams and covered them with repaired roofing. They put in new floors and paved the pathways with stone.

The Friends wanted to raise the people's standard of living, yet keep within local customs, but it didn't always work out as they expected. The villagers used their houses for sleeping and for shelter from the sun, wind, snow and rain. Otherwise they lived outside. Tamam's house lacked windows and she didn't want any, preferring her privacy, as did her neighbours.

By phase two: "20 more houses and more fund-raising," the people had changed their minds. They wanted windows, and maybe sky-lights, iron bars, screens and doors. The workers had to go back and redo most of the first 20. Then some of the villagers said, "we have a place for a toilet in our house."

The Friends made another survey.

By phase three: "Another 25 houses and lots more fund-raising," the villagers wanted bathrooms. "Dry toilets worked best," explain the Friends, "so we go back to install them in the other houses, too — 'go back' means they are happy with the

changes."

Aged Dana was rallying. As the new look spread over the village, so did enthusiasm in every direction. Families were stirred with new hope. The Tafileh Governorate brought in electricity. The Ministry of Public Works improved the road.

The RSCN built a visitor and research centre and launched the Wadi Dana socio-economic project, led by Rebecca Salti, to develop money-making products for the villagers — sun-dried apricots, grapes and figs, silver-leafed jewellery with the Dana stone, pottery in the ancient tradition — and to renovate the terraced gardens. Agricultural expert, Nabeeh Al Kayed, from the Queen Noor Al Hussein Foundation, helped organise the farmers and trained them in growing medicinal herbs and organic farming. Villagers were hired to clear the springs and channels of the entire area. The Friends of Dana were hired to clear the springs and channels of the entire area. The Friends of Dana were hired to clear the springs and channels of the entire area.

The orchards and terraced gardens began blooming again. Water reached the village again by a new stone structure with three streams of cool spring water jetting from its massive arched wall.

Villagers started requesting a new mosque to replace their caved-in relic, ammar Khammash researched historic mosques while the Friends went back to fund-raising. "It was a headache for funds," Today, Khammash's rustic stone mosque, shaded by old pines and cypress, enjoys the centre of attention, radiating tranquility, in friendly harmony with the

architecture and golden hues of the village and matching cliffs.

Now everyone wants to see Dana.

Tourists are coming. Amman people who have supported Dana are coming. Magazines are featuring its comeback. Documentary photographers are filming its wild panorama. The Friends of Archaeology brought 80 members to see it on their over-night stay at the camp site across the canyon. Over the coming year nature groups flying in to see the wildlife will visit this Ottoman village where the roosters still crow and the donkeys still bray and the muezzin still sings out his call to prayer without a microphone.

Inadvertently the friends of Dana have played a role in the renovation movement that has been sweeping Jordan. The 65 homes, the mosque and other buildings they restored will have a far-reaching impact on the area — Dana is becoming a model for economic and architectural revival. The work of these women in renovating the village has provided a crucial link between the effort to protect Dana's nature while providing a base for the people living next to the Reserve to improve their standard of living through tourism and related activities.

Having devoted a large part of their lives to their four-year adventure into the unknown, toiling with the zeal of a one-track mind, these wives and mothers have made unexpected gains in unexpected places. While breaking out of their comfortable urban environment to brave harsh weather, five-hour round

trips, non-stop discussions with excited villagers, and long absences from family, they have had a crash course in the problem, behaviour and psychology of Jordan's rural people. Their skills in strategy-planning, financing and organising implementation have developed automatically. On the personal level, they cherish the bond of friendship and closeness this experience has nurtured among them.

"Many times we felt we bit off more than we could chew," adds Maria. "But we've also shared elation and a rewarding sense of satisfaction. Our families, friends, and the people of Jordan have been wonderful. We couldn't have done it without their support — moral and financial. They came, they gave, they clapped. We want them to feel the reward as we do for what they have achieved."

There is much yet to be done.

The Friends have begun transforming another two dwellings into a small centre furnished with modern facilities, kitchenette, guest rooms, terrace and display area for villagers' handicrafts. The road needs to be paved with flagstones. Donors are welcome to fund a terraced courtyard between the mosque and the spring house. Many houses remain to be restored.

But, as Majida said "When you believe in something, it has to happen."

The writer is a travel writer and former sheep herder. She divides her time between her home in Salt Lake City and visiting her daughter in Jordan. She contributed the above article to the Jordan Times.

Yemeni leader ends visit

(Continued from page 1)

Parliament's committee on foreign and parliament affairs, Minister of Social Affairs and Labour Mohammad Abdullah Batani, Minister of Fisheries Abdullah Rahman Badad, secretary-general Bashiri, secretary-general Hosni Mubarak's life by unknown assailants in Addis Ababa.

The King voiced relief that Mr. Mubarak escaped the attack and said he planned to visit Cairo soon to congratulate the president on his escape. "We all suffer from what is known as terrorism," said the King. "We are against terrorism and terrorists, whoever they are and wherever they are."

for solidarity, "which is inevitable," and a desire to overcome the negative consequences of the Gulf crisis.

In reply to a question, the King said he was not mediating between Egypt and Sudan, which are feuding after a June 26 attempt on Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak's life by unknown assailants in Addis Ababa.

The King voiced relief that Mr. Mubarak escaped the attack and said he planned to visit Cairo soon to congratulate the president on his escape. "We all suffer from what is known as terrorism," said the King. "We are against terrorism and terrorists, whoever they are and wherever they are."

President Saleh said he was also not mediating between Cairo and Khartoum, but that he was to discuss the issue with Mr. Mubarak in Egypt on Friday. The issue is of concern to all Arab countries, he added.

the brotherly Iraqi people. We hope this suffering will end soon and we are keen to achieve that...these people have suffered enough and they should not suffer anymore."

The King also expressed confidence that Iraq would regain the status it had in the Arab World and the international scene and that it would be part of the positive atmosphere for peace in the region.

The King also voiced confidence that Yemen would achieve comprehensive progress and the unity of Yemen would be preserved. He also wished Yemen well in its efforts to reconcile with other Arab countries. "We support them (the Yemenis) with our capabilities and energies on the bilateral level and within the framework of our one Arab family..."

On Friday, King Hussein held another round of talks with President Saleh at the General Headquarters of the Armed Forces.

The Yemeni leader was seen off by the King, Crown Prince Hassan, Sharif Zeid and other top-level officials.

Serbs launch attack on Zepa

(Continued from page 12)

should be... accomplices to this barbarism, accomplices to these practices of ethnic cleansing, and their presence in that case would be in question," he said.

French Defence Minister Charles Millon headed for Bosnia on Friday after issuing Western allies a 48-hour deadline to join the French in response to the Serb attacks.

Mr. Millon's government is keen to use the new Anglo-French-led U.N. rapid reaction force against Serb aggression despite the reluctance of its allies. Only the U.N. can authorise action by the force and Britain has given a cool response.

The Clinton administration says it will support whatever decision the United Nations and European nations make on the use of force against Bosnian Serbs.

State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns said countries with peacekeepers in Bosnia must make the decision. He acknowledged that the Serbs' takeover of Srebrenica and the capture of dozens of Dutch peacekeepers had humiliated the United Nations.

Israel, PLO launch talks

(Continued from page 1)

Dennis Ross, the diplomat in charge of Middle Eastern affairs at the State Department, was asked to join the talks "at the request of both parties, as they try to conclude their negotiations by their own target date of July 25," said State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns.

Mr. Burns said the Israeli and Palestinian officials asked him to participate in conversations "about the status of the talks and the central issues of those talks."

Mr. Ross met Wednesday with Yasser Arafat in Gaza and Syrian President Hafez Al Assad in Damascus, Mr. Burns said, adding the diplomat had touched base and would meet later with Israeli leaders.

Mr. Burns said the July 25 date remained the target date for an accord between the parties, but said that even if that deadline is not met,

Australia to play active role

(Continued from page 1)

the issues discussed were identical.

In his comments to reporters, Mr. Evans also touched on the French decision to resume nuclear testing in the South Pacific. Australia is a strong opponent of nuclear testing and has severely criticised the French move.

"Obviously, the reaction in the South Pacific area has been very strong to the (French) decision... which we regard as provocative, dangerous and generally indefensible," said the foreign minister.

"This was a wrong decision at the wrong time," he said. "We can only hope (that) by a combination of protest and persuasion, we can encourage the French to rethink what was a very bad decision."

Mr. Evans' visit was the second by an Australian minister to Jordan this year. Trade Minister Bob McMullan visited in February in what was seen as a major boost to Jordanian-Australian trade relations.

According to official Jordanian figures, Australia's exports to Jordan — mostly livestock, meat, rice and

dairy products — amounted to about JD 40 million in 1994 while the Kingdom's exports to Australia — phosphates and fertilizer products — were around JD 7 million.

Australia, which has a large agricultural base, could increase its imports from Jordan, officials say.

While in Lebanon, Mr. Evans, foreign minister since September 1988, who will be accompanied by Minister of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs Nick Bolkus, will reopen the Australian Embassy in Beirut on Saturday. The mission was closed in 1984 at the height of the Lebanese civil war.

"An era of growth and prosperity beckons in the new Lebanon," the two ministers said in a joint statement on June 27. "We applaud the enthusiasm with which the Lebanese people have embraced the process of national reconciliation and are heartened by the reconstruction now occurring."

"It is clear that the renowned capabilities and talents of the Lebanese people are once again finding their fullest expression, to the benefit of their country, and, ultimately, to the wider region."

Turnover up, share prices down at AFM

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Turnover rose by 12 per cent and share prices slipped by nearly one per cent last week at the Amman Financial Market (AFM) as investor enthusiasm continued to be restrained by uncertainties regarding prospects for key economic reforms.

Brokers said the market was dampened by the delay in the presentation by the government of draft legislation related to taxation and investments and a new companies law to Parliament.

The draft laws were supposed to have been sent to Parliament last month, but there was no immediate explanation for the delay. The Council of Ministers approved amendments to the sales tax law last week, but it was not known when Parliament would take up the issue.

The weekly AFM report said turnover for the week ending Thursday rose to JD 5.6 million from the previous week's JD 5 million. A bloc sale of Dar Al Dawa shares worth nearly JD 1 million and trading in Arab Bank shares worth JD 850,000 led the list of trading for the week.

Other firms which saw significant action included the Jordan Tobacco and Cigarette Company with a volume of JD 347,000, the Philadelphia Bank with JD 276,000, Arab International Hotels with JD 265,000, Universal Modern Industries with JD 263,000, and the

Jordanian Electrical Power Company with JD 196,000.

The official AFM index based on 60 major companies from among the 120 listed in the market shed 1.4 points, or 0.9 per cent, to close at 155.1 points.

Industrials slipped by 2 points, or 1.5 per cent, to 179.93 points, insurance firms by 0.1 points, or 0.04 per cent, to close at 135.4 points, and service sector firms remained unchanged at 131.97 points, the AFM report said.

Changing hands during the week were 1.8 million shares under 2,906 contracts.

Trading involved shares of 88 companies. As business closed for the week, 20 of them had gained, 61 had slipped and seven remained unchanged.

Industrials accounted for 52.1 per cent of the turnover with JD 2.92 million, followed by banks with JD 1.87 million (33.4 per cent), service sector companies with JD 760,000 (13.6 per cent) and insurance companies with JD 50,000 (0.9 per cent).

AFM brokers said the relative inaction in the market was largely due to hesitation on the part of many to make major investment decisions.

Institutions also appeared to be apathetic to taking closer action in the last three weeks, and this had a serious effect on individual speculators, said the brokers.

Mercedes signs deal with China

BONN (AFP) — Mercedes-Benz signed an agreement in principle on Thursday with the South China Motor Corporation Ltd. (Nanfeng) for the production of big passenger cars and automobile engines in China. The German auto manufacturer announced.

The signing of the 1.4-billion-mark (one-billion-dollar) deal took place in Bonn during a visit by Chinese President Jiang Zemin.

The agreement, announced in Stuttgart Wednesday, covers the creation of a joint-venture of which Mercedes would hold 45 per cent and Nanfeng 55 per cent.

The venture would produce 60,000 so-called monospace vehicles and 100,000 diesel and petrol (gasoline) engines a year at two factories in southern China. One fifth of the production would be exported, Mercedes said.

Mercedes-Benz spokesman Christian Dau said the agreement in principle would give way later to a cooperation contract.

Under the agreement Mercedes had won "near-exclusivity" for the production of monospace vehicles and motors, the spokesman said, noting that the company had beaten U.S. giants Ford and Chrysler to win the deal.

Saudi-China oil refinery talks snagged

SINGAPORE (R) — China will terminate talks with Saudi Arabia on expanding capacity in Maoming, China's biggest southern oil refinery, if agreements cannot be reached by the end of the year, a refinery official said on Friday.

"If talks cannot reach any agreement by year-end, we will call for future discussions," Fang Guangxin, chief engineer at the Maoming Refinery, told Reuters.

State-owned Saudi Aramco has been holding discussions since May 1994 with Maoming, China's second largest refiners, located in booming Guangdong Province. The latest round of talks was held late last week, Mr. Fang said.

With or without Saudi cooperation, Maoming plans to expand the 8.5 million tonnes-per-year refinery by five million tonnes with addition of a primary distillation unit by June 1997. The project will cost about \$333 million, the company said.

Negotiations reached an impasse earlier this year when the two sides could not agree on the size of the Saudi stake in the new plant and the existing units at Maoming.

"The Saudis said they were afraid of competition from

domestic refineries," Mr. Fang said.

But the Chinese found the fears unfounded and incomprehensible given the large domestic demand in the south, he added.

Standardised ex-refinery prices for refined products would assure Aramco of a profit margin, Mr. Fang said.

"Prices (of refined products) are the same everywhere," he said. "We find it very strange that they have been talking to us and coming here for over a year, yet they don't seem to understand the Chinese oil industry."

Saudi Aramco had wanted at least a 50 per cent stake, but Beijing limits foreign ownership in joint ventures to 49 per cent.

Aramco was also reluctant to assume ownership of various non-oil operations connected with the refinery, which goes against Beijing's policy of not allowing any joint venture to result in a loss of jobs.

China's oil refineries are massive organisations run like self-contained towns with housing, shops and hospitals and provide millions of jobs.

Maoming has an active workforce of 25,000 but supports a population of 80,000 including retirees and dependents.

While Mr. Fang said the latest talks were cordial, he maintained that Saudi participation or support was not pivotal to Maoming's expansion plans.

"We have raised between 70 to 80 per cent of the funds needed for our expansion programme ... and the rest can easily be raised either by our headquarters (state refinery Sinopec) or by us," Mr. Fang said. "We are not dependent on the Saudis."

Aramco had suggested setting up a joint venture company with the Maoming refinery to procure crude oil from Saudi Arabia for its operations and to market its products, he said.

"But we don't see any need for it. We are already buying crude for our refinery ourselves and we are marketing the products," Mr. Fang said.

The Maoming refinery set up a marketing arm in Singapore early this year which procures crude and markets refined products.

Mr. Fang did not preclude talks with other companies for other expansion programmes. "We can still talk to other companies in the future if we have expansion programmes later on," he said.

Solidere sales seen at \$150m in 2 months

BEIRUT (R) — Lebanon's Solidere company has sold land and buildings in central Beirut worth \$150 million since starting sales two months ago and many more deals are in the pipeline, an industry source said on Thursday.

"Total sales so far are \$150 million," the source said.

"The first sale was in May. There are many, many demands and foreign buyers are in discussions, including international companies," he added.

The \$1.8 billion Solidere company formed last year to rebuild central Beirut has sold nine plots and two buildings since the pressure of demand persuaded it to start immediate sales rather than wait until 1996 as originally planned, the source said.

The area sold totals 30,000 square metres out of 1.8 million square metres Solidere is developing, and the built-up area of the 11 projects will be 150,000 square metres.

The price of the sales was

\$950 per square metre of built-up area, which works out at nearly \$5,000 per square metre of land, the source said. But this could quickly rise.

"Sales now are at \$950 but maybe in one or two months it will be \$1,200," he said.

A Solidere source told Reuters the board decided to start selling in May because of many demands from prospective buyers.

"We were under pressure from people calling us, so we decided to start sales," he said.

"When the company was formed in May 1994 many people sent us dossiers and asked how they could buy. The company waited and waited and then the board decided to start selling because we couldn't keep these people waiting," the Solidere source added.

The plots sold so far are for construction of two five-star hotels, a three-star hotel, a bank headquarters, a construction company headquarters, a newspaper office,

headquarters of the Arab Contractors' Association, a \$70 million commercial centre and a private polyclinic.

Saudi Prince Hussam Ibn Saud recently bought 3,000 square metres for construction of an Intercontinental Forum Hotel expected to cost \$29 million, the industry source said.

Two traditional buildings have also been sold, one for conversion into restaurants and the other for a food company headquarters, he said.

They are among 265 buildings of architectural or social value that are being preserved in the city centre while the rest of the war-damaged buildings are demolished for redevelopment.

A Muslim religious organisation and a Roman Catholic religious order are in discussions to buy land to build schools and hospitals and the Beirut Stock Exchange is discussing buying a building for its trading floor, the industry source added.

Gulf oil prices expected to fall

DUBAI (R) — Prices for refined oil products in the Gulf spot market are expected to weaken further now that the Indian Oil Corp (IOC) has secured most of its import needs for August through a buying tender, oil traders in the Gulf said.

Supplies in the market from Gulf refineries are more than adequate to meet IOC's needs and that there will be little short-covering this month to lift prices unless refinery maintenance or additional tendering emerges, they added.

The price of gas oil (diesel) has fallen to around 10 cents a barrel premium to independently-assessed price quotes FOB Mideast, down from 35 cents premium just two weeks ago. The gas oil quote was notionally assessed at \$19.65 a barrel.

Kerosene prices were assessed by traders at parity to the Mideast quote (\$19.70 a barrel), down from a 15 cents a barrel premium at the start of July.

"The premium is now under threat," a trader in Dubai said.

Gulf traders said that prices for the two fuels could be supported by buying tenders from Sri Lanka and east Africa states but that fresh gas oil supplies out of Iran could undermine any recovery in prices.

Other news in a week when crude oil futures prices touched their lowest level so far this year is as follows:

The Vienna-based OPEC Secretariat said that the group's production rose to 24.68 million barrels per day (bpd) last month, up from 24.71 million bpd in May and above the organisation's supply quota of 24.52 million bpd.

The Kuwait Petroleum Corp (KPC) was the main beneficiary of the IOC tender and will supply India with 135,000 tonnes of kerosene and 270,000 tonnes of diesel in August.

Kerosene has already been sold to Kenya out of the Jubail refinery in Saudi Arabia and the same refinery is likely to supply an August tender issued by Sri Lanka.

Bunker fuel oil prices in the region fell to their lowest level so far this year with 180 st Grade talked at \$86.00 a tonne from \$88.00 at the start of the month and drift of the 1995 high of \$111.00 a tonne.

But Gulf-based brokers noted increased interest from owners of very large crude carriers (VLCCs) for bunker fuel.

Freight rate costs for petroleum products from the Gulf to the Far East were unchanged to slightly weaker. Fuel oil rates to Singapore were assessed at \$5.36 a tonne, from \$6.55 last week. Middle distillates to Singapore and naphtha to Tokyo were unchanged at \$12.96 and \$21.81.

UAE turns to European gas market

ABU DHABI (AFP) — The United Arab Emirates (UAE) is turning to France and other European countries to market its liquefied natural gas after lower demand in Japan created a surplus to its production.

The Abu Dhabi Gas Liquefaction Company (ADGAS), the UAE's main LNG producer, said it had sold nearly 250,000 tonnes to three European consumers and had finalised deals to sell around one million tonnes for the same firms.

It was the first time that the UAE, a key OPEC oil producer, exports LNG to Europe as the continent gets most of its Arab gas supplies from Algeria.

The Japanese Tokyo Electric Power Company (TEPCO) had monopolised LNG purchases from the UAE under a long-term contract signed in 1977. It was extended for 25 years in 1994 after three years of negotiations.

In its weekly bulletin, ADGAS said expansions at its Das Liquefaction plant had created a large surplus as TEPCO was unable to buy all the output.

"Because the economic downturn in Japan and the strong yen, TEPCO has been unable to help by taking LNG in excess of the contract," it said.

"ADGAS has more products available than was contracted for. These factors have presented ADGAS with an opportunity to sell LNG in a short-term."

Under the new 25-year contract, TEPCO has agreed to nearly double its imports from ADGAS to 4.9 million tonnes following the completion of a 1.3-billion-dollar project to boost the output capacity of Das plant. The amounts include around 4.3 million tonnes of LNG and the rest cover Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG), according to industry sources in Abu Dhabi.

The project also included building four gas tankers in Japan at a cost of nearly \$600 million. Three of them have been delivered while the remaining one would be received this year.

The sources said ADGAS was also negotiating for the lease of additional tankers to face any increase in demand by the new European clients.

"I don't think this situation will last long as demand in Japan is projected to rise in the near future and Algeria will resume normal export operations in Europe," an industry source said.

ADGAS said the three European companies — Gaz de France, Distrigas of Belgium and the Spanish Enagas — were short of LNG supplies because of a disruption from Algeria due to maintenance of its facilities.

Algeria is the top Arab gas exporter to the West, with a total of around 600,000 equivalent barrels per day in 1993. Nearly 563,000 bpd were supplied to France, Belgium, Spain, Italy and other countries.

According to the Nicosia-based Middle East Economic Survey, Algeria is committed to contracts until the year 2000 to export a total 33.9 billion cubic metres of natural gas per year and 25.8 billion cubic metres of LNG. Most of them would go to Europe.

ADGAS said it had sold around 180,000 tonnes of LNG to Distrigas and Gaz de France and 65,000 tonnes to Enagas in the first quarter of 1995. The new contracts until March next year involve supplying 288,000 tonnes in nine cargoes to Enagas and 717,000 tonnes in five cargoes to the other two companies.

ADGAS expansion project was completed in late 1994 and involved the installation of the biggest production train in the world. The expansion was requested by TEPCO in 1990 to cater for its growing needs.

Experts said the expansion and similar projects by other local companies would sharply boost the UAE's gas export earnings, which stood at around four billion dirhams (\$1.08 billion) in 1994.

The UAE, the first LNG producer in the Gulf, has the fourth biggest gas reserves in the world after those in Russia, Iran and Qatar. They are estimated at around 5.79 trillion cubic metres.

Turks, Arab nations study \$590m power grid

ANKARA (R) — Energy ministers and officials from Turkey, Egypt, Jordan, Syria and Iraq discussed a \$590 million project on Thursday to link their power grids at a conference in southern Turkey, Anatolian News Agency said.

Turkey's Energy Minister Yusef Atasoy told the meetings the "interconnection

project," launched in 1989, envisaged signing an agreement to enable the transfer of reserve electricity among the member states in 1996.

He was quoted by the agency as saying that a 400-megawatt power link would be completed by 1997 between Turkey and Syria, and another 400-megawatt between Syria and Iraq, the first

phase of the deal.

"Later Syria and Jordan will be connected on a 300-megawatt power link. A 400-megawatt power transfer will be made from Jordan to Egypt and 300-megawatt from Egypt to Jordan," he said.

Jordanian Energy Minister Samih Darwazah told Reuters in Amman before leaving

for the meeting that Jordan's link with Egypt would cost about \$35 million and that with Syria \$75 million.

At a later stage when Turkey and Iraq are linked, the grid between Turkey, Iraq and Syria will have a 750 megawatt power transfer capacity," Mr. Atasoy said.

Turkey plans to spend

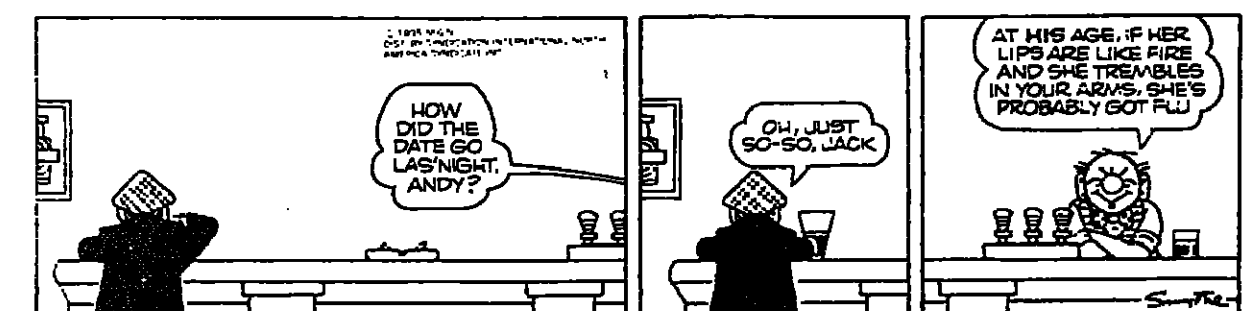
\$35.44 million in 1995 to build power lines from the gigantic Ataturk dam in the southeast to the Syrian border, to be later extended to Damascus in 1997.

A further \$10.97 million spending is planned to build power lines to the Iraqi border to link up Turkish and Iraqi networks by 2002.

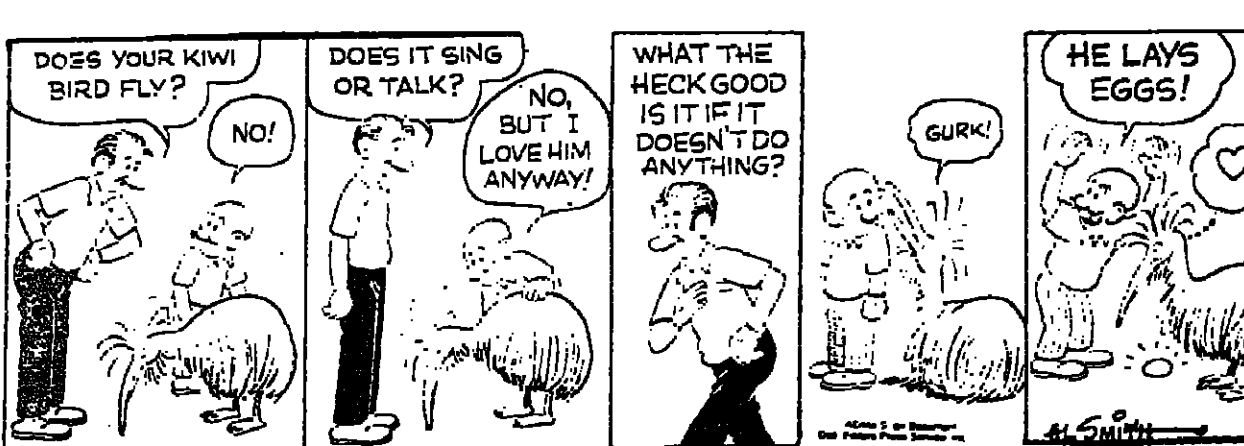
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Andy Capp



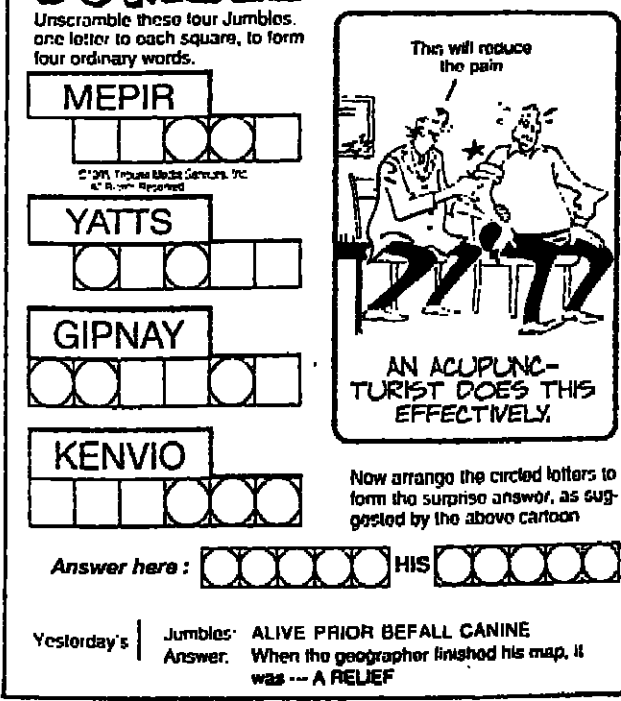
Mutt'n'Jeff



THE BETTER HALF. By Glasbergen



JUMBLE. THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME



HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR SATURDAY, JULY 15, 1995

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Cooperate with loved ones in getting home conditions improved and all in fine order this morning, then you can gab about town this evening.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Get busy at today's routines and buy items you have long been looking for, and then this evening can be delightful at home.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Early today handle any leftover business details this morning, and in the evening you can visit with friends or relatives.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Go ahead with whatever you have in mind today for health and appearance improvement which will turn out well.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Many a personal task can be completed today, so get busy early this morning and make improvements on such, then join with friends later tonight.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) This is a fine day for enjoying the company of good friends at social affairs, but this evening must be reserved for the one you love.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) First get busy at the tasks for which you have had little time during the busy week, then pursue personal goals.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Formulate some plan early this morning, and then carry through with it and test it on the public tonight.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) This is a good day to handle those difficulties you have found difficult to solve before this and which has hindered your progress.

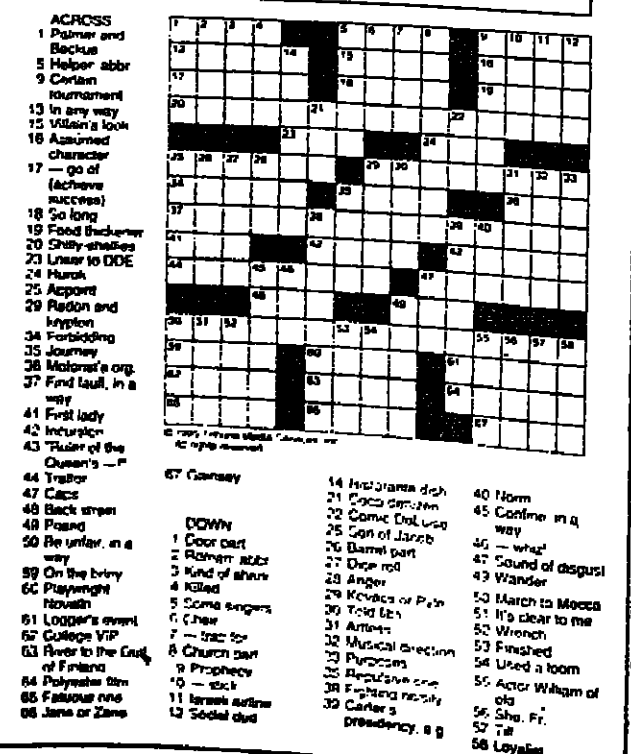
CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Take time to come to a fine agreement with your fellow associates early today and tonight show them your appreciation.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) This is a fine morning to organise your tasks so that they become easier to handle. Take any health treatments and exercise needed.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) This is a good day for enjoying amusements which most please you. Then you can handle duties requiring your attention this evening.

Birthstone of July: Ruby — Tiger's Eye

THE Daily Crossword



Business daily beat

A review
of economic news
from the Arabic press

Factories call for hiking prices of dairy products

Owners and managers of dairies in Jordan called for reconsidering the recent rise in the prices of their products as set by the Ministry of Supply, saying it was insignificant compared to the rise in fresh milk prices. Threatening to stop receiving any quantity of milk from cow breeders if the prices are not hiked once more, the owners and managers of dairy factories called for raising the prices of their products in a manner commensurate with the rises in the prices of fresh milk. At an emergency meeting they held at the Amman Chamber of Industry, they said milk prices rose by 10 per cent while the rise in the prices of dairy products was less than four per cent, accusing the ministry of being unfair to them. The ministry decided to raise milk prices by 20 fils a kilo in view of the rise in animal feed prices. The dairies, which receive 25 tonnes of fresh milk a day from breeders, stand to lose JD 10,000 a year in case the ministry does not meet their demands, they said (Al Dustour).

Jordan will participate in an international exhibition of garden and picnic furniture and equipment to be held in the German city of Cologne in the period August 3-5. More than 1,100 companies representing 50 countries will participate in the exhibition (Al Ra'i).

A new holding company, Al 'Asr Investments Company, was established with a capital of JD 7.2 million. The establishment of the company was announced at a meeting held in Amman in the presence of 23 founders. A report prepared by the founders' committee said procedures to establish the company started four months ago and it was registered with the Ministry of Industry and Trade on June 22, 1995; as a holding company to be able to invest in as many fields as possible. Omar Salah, who was elected chairman of the board of directors at the meeting, said the company will establish various companies along with reputed international establishments. Mr. Salah said the company was currently in touch with an English company affiliated to the American Hanes group to establish an underwear factory expected to start production by the end of the year. He added that there were also contacts with the American Destination company to expand an existing ready to wear factory and market cotton clothes and products in the U.S. (Al Aswaq).

The Jordan and Gulf Bank opened its branch in the West Bank city of Tulkarm in a special ceremony held in the city's main square. The branch is the bank's second in the Palestinian territories (Al Aswaq).

Strike cripples British rail

LONDON (R) — Britain's national Rail network ground to a standstill on Friday when train drivers launched a 24-hour strike over pay.

Only Eurostar trains, the only international service in Britain which runs through the Channel Tunnel to Paris and Brussels, was operating normally.

Just a handful of other trains were running in the morning rush hour as most of the 12,000 drivers belonging to the Union Aslef heeded a strike call, dashing hopes by employers that many would turn up for work as normal.

Up to 18,000 passenger trains are expected to be cancelled during the day, losing British Rail, which runs the Rail network, up to 10 million pounds (\$15.88 million) in revenue.

Airlines and coach operators put on extra services to cope with expected demand from train commuters trying to find another way to get to work.

Roads into London — where 100,000 people usually travel to work by train — were busier than normal but not chaotic as the morning rush hour began.

Some people were expected to take the day off work rather than struggle through heavy traffic on the roads.

The capital's underground railway, not operated by British Rail, was working as normal but could be sucked into future one-day strikes that the union has threatened.

The strike is the first in a series of six one-day stoppages planned by Aslef after it rejected a three per cent pay offer.

Business leaders said they were disappointed and frustrated at the prospect of Rail stoppages this year after suffering heavy losses last year.

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET

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ORGANISED MARKET TRADING ACTIVITY FOR THE PERIOD (08/07/1995 - 12/07/1995)
WEEKLY REPORT



COMPANY'S NAME	TRADING VOLUME JD	PREV. CLOSING PRICE	OPENING PRICE	CLOSING PRICE
ARAB BANK P.C.	850,345	218.500	218.500	216.000
JORDAN NATIONAL BANK	191,920	4.570	4.570	4.670
CAYO AMMAN BANK	8,569	4.550	4.550	4.510
BANK OF JORDAN	12,846	3.300	3.300	3.470
MIDDLE EAST INVESTMENT BANK	7,154	1.330	1.330	1.320
INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT BANK	13,284	2.570	2.570	2.550
THE HOUSING BANK	181,685	8.100	8.100	8.150
JORDAN KUNAIF BANK	13,990	2.850	2.850	2.840
JORDAN GULF BANK	11,144	1.290	1.290	1.240
ARAB JORDAN INVESTMENT BANK	42,653	3.950	3.950	3.900
JORDAN ISLAMIC BANK	74,547	3.760	3.760	3.750
UNION BANK FOR SAVING & INVESTMENT	5,333	4.520	4.520	4.400
BUSINESS BANK	6,403	3.900	3.900	3.850
JORDAN INVESTMENT & FINANCE BANK	71,719	4.250	4.250	4.150
BEIT KHALIL SAVING & INVESTMENT FOR HOUSING	15,267	3.780	3.780	3.770
AMMAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	73,585	1.120	1.120	1.100
ARAB BANKING CORPORATION/JORDAN	2,767	5.350	5.350	5.300
PHILADELPHIA INVESTMENT BANK	276,301	1.610	1.610	1.660

BANKS SECTOR 1867510 INDEX NUMBER: 179.73
CHANGE -0.63%

JERUSALEM INSURANCE	3,612	4.200	4.200	4.200
JORDAN FRENCH INSURANCE	32,462	2.620	2.620	2.670
HOLY LAND INSURANCE	1,485	2.830	2.830	2.970
ARAB LIFE & ACCIDENT INSURANCE	650	2.600	2.600	2.600
JORDAN GULF INSURANCE	608	3.200	3.200	3.040
THE NATIONAL ALIA INSURANCE	6,000	3.100	3.100	3.000

INSURANCE SECTOR 44817 INDEX NUMBER: 135.40
CHANGE -0.03%

JORDANIAN ELECTRIC POWER	194,789	1.710	1.710	1.650
ARAB INTERNATIONAL HOTELS	265,173	5.850	5.850	6.000
JORDAN NATIONAL SHIPPING LINES	52,879	2.810	2.810	2.920
NATIONAL PORTFOLIO SECURITIES	25,573	2.400	2.400	2.210
REAL ESTATE INVESTMENT	5,845	1.050	1.050	1.030
JORDAN INTERNATIONAL TRADING CENTER	9,648	1.230	1.230	1.200
MACHINERY EQUIP. RENTING & MAINTENANCE	335	0.670	0.670	0.670
ARAB INTER. FOR INVESTMENT & EDUCATION	69,386	3.300	3.300	3.310

SERVICES SECTOR 625980 INDEX NUMBER: 131.97
CHANGE 0.00%

JORDAN TOBACCO & CIGARETTES	347,831	26.250	26.250	26.940
ATZEMKEP COMST. MATERIAL MANUFACTURING	3,100	1.240	1.240	1.240
THE JORDAN CEMENT FACTORIES	124,872	3.800	3.800	3.700
JORDAN PHOSPHATE MINES	41,046	3.040	3.040	3.050
THE ARAB PHOSPHATE	11,072	5.110	5.110	5.120
JORDAN PETROLEUM REFINERY	37,953	10.380	10.380	10.220
THE INDUSTRIAL COMMERCIAL & AGRICULTURAL	1,977	3.390	3.390	3.250
THE JORDAN WOODSTOCK MILLS	790	7.950	7.950	7.900
ARAB PHARMACEUTICAL MANUFACTURING	69,151	5.000	5.000	4.840
JORDAN CERAMIC INDUSTRIES	13,190	6.000	6.000	5.950
JORDAN DAIRY	1,750	2.400	2.400	2.300
THE JORDAN PAPER MANUFACTURING	4,408	2.630	2.630	2.560

JORDAN PAPER & CARDBOARD FACTORIES	14,873	3.800	3.800	3.800
THE PUBLIC MINING	1,751	3.150	3.150	3.180
SPINNING & WEAVING	55,514	2.070	2.070	2.020
RAFIA INDUSTRIES	10,834	2.490	2.490	2.470
DAR AL DARA DEVELOPMENT & INVESTMENT	944,869	7.900	7.900	7.950
ARAB INVESTMENT & INTERNATIONAL TRADE	24,200	0.760	0.760	0.770
ARAB ALUMINIUM INDUSTRY	33,030	5.800	5.800	5.690
LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	30,659	0.540	0.540	0.510
ARAB PAPER CONVERTING & TRADING	17,306	1.400	1.400	1.390
NATIONAL STEEL INDUSTRIES	858	2.550	2.550	2.450
NATIONAL INDUSTRIES	3,488	1.190	1.190	1.170
INTERMEDIATE PETRO-CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES	185,136	2.250	2.250	2.260
JORDAN CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES	425	4.250	4.250	4.250
JORDAN ROCKWOOL INDUSTRIES	695	1.170	1.170	1.120
ALADDIN INDUSTRIES	653	4.500	4.500	4.350
JORDAN INDUSTRIES & MATCH/JINCO	256	0.630	0.630	0.640
JORDAN SULPHO-CHEMICALS	1,543	1.690	1.690	1.610
ARAB CENTER FOR PHARM. & CHEMICALS	12,601	2.260	2.260	2.220
KAWTHER INVESTMENT	1,368	1.500	1.500	1.540
UNIVERSAL MODERN INDUSTRIES	263,742	3.210	3.210	3.230
JORDAN INDUSTRIAL RESOURCES CO.	56,179	2.170	2.170	2.120
JORDAN NEW CABLE COMPANY	46,571	1.940	1.940	1.890

INDUSTRIAL SECTOR 2364238 INDEX NUMBER: 129.67
CHANGE -1.51%

GRAND TOTAL 4902544 INDEX NUMBER: 155.12

PARALLEL MARKET TRADING ACTIVITY FOR THE PERIOD (08/07/1995 - 12/07/1995)
WEEKLY REPORT

COMPANY'S NAME	TRADING VOLUME JD	PREV. CLOSING PRICE	OPENING PRICE	CLOSING PRICE
CENTRAL GENERAL TRADING & STORAGE	2,048	0.740	0.740	0.710
JORDAN TRADE FACILITIES	19,880	0.820	0.820	0.800
SARKA PRIVATE UNIVERSITY	22,260	1.430	1.430	1.420
UNITED CO. FOR ORGANIZING LAND TRANS.	10,979	2.470	2.470	2.430
ARAB FIN INV.CO	78,597	1.280	1.280	1.150
ARAB FOOD & MEDICAL APPLIANCES	12,956	1.000	1.000	0.950
NATIONAL CHLORINE INDUSTRIES CO.LTD	1,895	1.890	1.890	1.870
NATIONAL TEXTILE & PLASTICS IND. CO	17,430	1.100	1.100	1.040
RAYKAX DIES & MOULD	6,682	1.070	1.070	1.040
EL-SAY READY WEAR MANUFACTURING CO.	7,087	2.270	2.270	2.150
INTERNATIONAL TOBACCO & CIGARETTES	16,325	1.500	1.500	1.450
UNIVERSAL METALS	2,800	1.500	1.500	1.380
KID PHARMA	4,582	0.990	0.990	0.970
UNION CHEMICAL & VEGETABLE OIL INDUSTRY	17,926	2.360	2.360	2.090
JORDAN STEEL	205,530	1.030	1.030	1.010
ARAB ELECTRIC INDUSTRIES	3,327	0.900	0.900	0.830
UNION TOBACCO	45,679	1.700	1.700	1.690
RAFI PHARMACEUTICALS	7,934	0.970	0.970	0.960
INDUSTRIES ENGINEERING	6,533	0.930	0.930	0.870
INDUSTRIAL CERAMIC	177,681	1.450	1.450	1.450
TEXTILE MANUFACTURING	13,910	1.000	1.000	0.900
PEARL SANITARY PAPER CONVERTING	8,846	0.910	0.910	0.950

GRAND TOTAL 691674

Currency	New York Close 12/7/95	Tokyo Close 12/7/95
Sterling Pound	1.5915	1.5913
Deutsche Mark	1.4025	1.4049
Swiss Franc	1.1675	1.1719
French Franc	4.8810	4.8905
Japanese Yen	87.35	87.70
European Currency Unit	1.3220	1.3169

Currency	1 MTH	3 MTHS	6 MTHS	12 MTHS
U.S. Dollar	5.64	5.56	5.50	5.43
Sterling Pound	6.37	6.50	6.68	6.93
Deutsche Mark	4.25	4.25	4.25	4.32
Swiss Franc	2.58	2.62	2.75	2.93
French Franc	6.43	6.28	6.10	6.03
Japanese Yen	0.68	0.68	0.62	0.62
European Currency Unit	5.66	5.87	5.90	6.06

Metal	USD/Oz	JD/Gm	Metal	USD/Oz	JD/Gm
Gold	389.30	7.50	Silver	5.86	0.120

Currency	Bid	Offer
U.S. Dollar	0.6970	0.6990
Sterling Pound	1.1083	1.1138
Deutsche Mark	0.4961	0.4988
Swiss Franc	0.5264	0.5294
French Franc	0.1428	0.1435
Japanese Yen	0.7959	0.7999
Dutch Guilder	0.4430	0.4455
Swedish Krona	0.0431	0.0433
Italian Lira	0.0431	0.0433
Belgian Franc	0.0431	0.0433

Central Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin Dates: 15/7/1995

Currency	U.S. \$1.00 costs	Canadian dollar
U.S. Dollar	1.3592/02	1.3884/94
U.S. Dollar	1.5554/64	1.5554/64
U.S. Dollar	1.1614/24	1.1614/24
U.S. Dollar	28.56/60	28.56/60
U.S. Dollar	4.8410/60	4.8410/60
U.S. Dollar	1606.4/1.4	1606.4/1.4
U.S. Dollar	87.12/22	87.12/22
U.S. Dollar	7.1750/50	7.1750/50
U.S. Dollar	6.1730/80	6.1730/80
U.S. Dollar	5.4135/65	5.4135/65
U.S. Dollar	51.5958/68	51.5958/68
One sterling	3.88.05/388.35	3.88.05/388.35
One ounce of gold	388.05/388.35	388.05/388.35

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World Basketball Championship Jordan impressive in 61-51 defeat to U.S.

By Aileen Bannayan
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Jordan's Under-18 national basketball team impressed world basketball officials when they lost by a mere 10 points to titleholders the United States 61-51 in their first round match at the 5th Junior World Basketball Championship currently underway in Greece.

Although the team had also lost to runners-up Italy 87-64 in their opening match, team and Jordan Basketball Federation (JBF) officials expressed their satisfaction as the young group of players are certain to secure a bright future for Jordanian basketball.

Jordan was to play Australia late Friday evening. The Australian team, who had finished at a disappointing 11th place in the 1992 championship, are now the unbeaten team in Group C after upsetting titleholders the U.S. 71-69 and Italy 74-66.

Jordan, a third place finisher in the Asian Championship, gave the U.S. a hard time before losing the first half 32-29.

The U.S. opened the second half with a 14-2 run

but Jordan outscored the titleholders 15-3 to close the gap and tie the game at 49-49 with 4 minutes remaining.

The U.S. outscored Jordan 12-2 in the final minutes to end the game with a 10 point victory after Jordan's Zeid Alkhas, Ma'an Odeh and Ashraf Samarah were fouled out.

Jordan's top scorers were: Zeid Alkhas 20, Ihab Msh 9 and Ashraf Samarah 9 and Ma'an Odeh 6.

In their first match Jordan lost to Italy 87-64, the first half ending 36-28. The Kingdom's team lost a total 16 free throws and 21 shots, while the Italian team had 14 steals.

Ma'an Odeh was the top scorer with 15 followed by Zeid Alkhas with 13.

Sixteen countries are competing in the championship. Jordan is playing in Group C which is probably the toughest as it includes titleholders the U.S., runners-up Italy and Australia.

Group A includes China, Venezuela, Lithuania, and Croatia. Group B includes Nigeria, S. Korea, Argentina and France. Group D includes Angola, Puerto Rico, Greece and Spain.

Other results came as follows:

Group A
Croatia - China 90-71
Lithuania - Venezuela 85-84 in overtime
Group B
France - Nigeria 76-55
Argentina - S. Korea 93-83

Group D
Spain - Angola 91-49
Greece - Puerto Rico 109-74

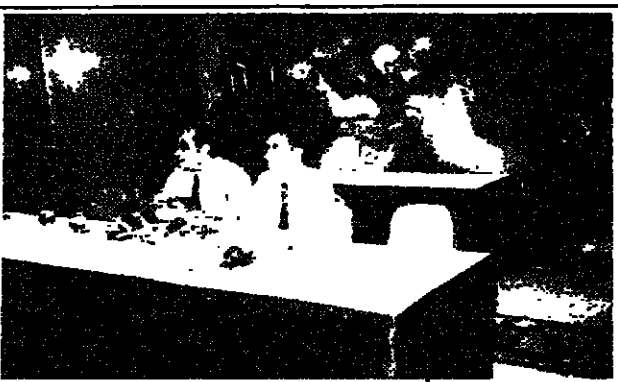
The first round matches will run up to July 21st when the competing teams begin the second round. The qualifiers will play for the 1-16th places in the final round July 22.

The U-18 team is the first to represent Jordan in a world championship, and only the third Arab country to qualify for the World Basketball Championship. Egypt finished last in Sao Paulo in 1979 while Syria came in 12th among 16 in the 1992 championship in Canada.

Jordan's team includes Zeid Alkhas, Ma'an Odeh, Ashraf Samarah, Mahmoud Sha'ban, Samer Nino, Ihab Msh, Ramzi Ghaim, Fadi Al Saqqa, Zeid Zu'mot, Ra'ed Ghosheh, Ziyad Naghoj, and Seif Lada.

Match statistics

	Jordan	U.S.
Fast Breaks	6/11	9/21
Fouls	18	15
Rebounds	36	47
Assists	4	10
Turnovers	23	27
Steals	10	17
Blocks	1	6



Qweider launches Femina

THE QWEIDER Trading Establishment held a press conference at the Philadelphia Hotel to launch the new Femina perfume, of Alberta Ferretti, in the local market.

Director general of the establishment, Ali Qweider addressed the press: Alberta Ferretti took her first step into the world of fashion at the age of 17. Today, as the head of Aeffe SpA, a leader in Italian ready to wear, she not only produces her own lines, but produces and distributes a number of other fashion designers of renown as well. Her clothing line is enhanced by lines for eyewear, shoes, scarves, ceramics and two collections of children's wear.

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Matthaeus unlikely to start new season

MUNICH (R) — Germany's World Cup captain Lothar Matthaeus, who has been out of soccer for the last six months because of a serious Achilles tendon injury, is unlikely to be fit to start the new season.

The 34-year-old midfielder, who missed the second half of last season after an operation on his lower left heel, has been told he will need further surgery on the tendon, his club Bayern Munich said on Friday.

Matthaeus is unlikely to train for several weeks and will almost certainly miss the start of the new German season in mid-August.

"He will need an operation on the same tendon. We are not sure how long he will be out of action. That will depend on his recovery," Bayern spokesman Markus Hoerwick said.

Many feared the career of Germany's most capped player, the star of their 1990 World Cup triumph in Italy, could be over after he tore the tendon last January.

Matthaeus has not played competitively for Bayern or the national team since, although he had been training hard with Bayern at the end of the season and wanted to return to action.

His international future could now be in serious doubt. National coach Berti Vogts refused to call Matthaeus back to Germany duty at the end of the season, a decision which upset the veteran.

The midfielder, who has been replaced by striker Juergen Klinsmann as national team captain and by Borussia Dortmund's Matthias Sammer as libero, is now unlikely to be ready to continue Germany's European Championship qualifying campaign at the start of September.

Vogts has said Matthaeus needs to prove his form in the Bundesliga before he can represent his country again.

If the midfielder struggles with injury throughout the



Lothar Matthaeus

season, Vogts is unlikely to take him to next year's European championship finals in England, after which Matthaeus is expected to retire from international football.

Matthaeus is being treated by one of Europe's most respected sports doctors in Hans-Wilhelm Mueller-

Wohlfarth, who has three-times Wimbledon champion Boris Becker and Britain's Olympic 100 metres champion Linford Christie on his list of patients.

Mueller-Wohlfarth said, however, the injury would probably not need a plaster this time.

Brit wins 11th Tour stage

SAINT ETIENNE (AFP) — Britain's Max Sciandri won the 199km 11th stage of the Tour de France here Thursday when he held off Colombia's Hernan Buenahora in a sprint to the line.

The two riders were more than seven minutes clear of the rest of the field at one time and still managed to finish over five minutes ahead of the peloton but race leader Miguel Indurain of Spain retains the yellow jersey.

Sciandri, who was born in Derby but spent more of his life in Italy, decided to race for Britain this January after years of being ignored by the Italian selectors.

For the 28-year-old Sciandri, taking part in his fourth Tour, it was his first ever stage victory.

The last British winner was Chris Boardman last year in a time-trial.

Sciandri and Buenahora broke away on their own 50 kilometres from home and despite the blistering heat managed to stretch the gap with the pack to seven minutes 36 seconds with 10 kilometres to go.

The race for third place went to Germany's Rolf Aldag who held off Italy's Andrea Tafi and Dutchman Erik Brukink to finish nearly three minutes adrift from Sciandri.

The three riders were part of the original breakaway group with Sciandri and Buenahora which began at just after 50 kilometres from the start



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TODAY AT	CINEMA TEL:634144 PHILADELPHIA Sharon Stone, William Baldwin & Tom Berenger in Sliver Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	CINEMA TEL:699238 PLAZA Charlie Sheen & Kristy Swanson in The Chase Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 5:00, 8:30, 10:30	CINEMA TEL:677420 CONCORD CONCORD "1" The best love story Only you SHOWS: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30 CONCORD "2" Mrs Doubtfire Shows: 3:30, 5:30, 11	AMMOON THEATRE TEL:618274 - 618275 MUSA HIJAZIN "sumaa" IN Hi Citizen daily at 8:30 pm written & directed by Mohammed Shawaqfeh	Nabl & Hisham Theatre TEL:675571 Presents KABARET Abeer Issa Ghassan Mashini with Amer khamash, Khalil Jahmani, Mohammad Huseini and Issam Al Hanbali The theatre closes on Monday Performances start at 8:30 p.m.	Nabl & Hisham's TEL:625155 AHLAN THEATRE Shows will start July 3, 1995 on Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays Shows will feature the play Arab Summit and Peace and on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays Shows will feature the play (Ahlam Taleeb) Welcome Normalisation Shows start at 8:30 p.m. For reservation please call tel. 625155 Amman
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JORDAN TIMES
TEL: 667171



Much work to go in year before Olympics

ATLANTA (Agencies) — Planners for the 1996 Olympics have been counting the days until the Atlanta Games.

But now, with barely a year remaining before the opening ceremony, the days are beginning to seem like hours and soon they will seem like minutes.

"We realise there will be increasing attention on many of our programmes — transportation, medical, accreditation and security," Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games (ACOG) president Billy Payne said. "The time has come."

Wednesday will mark one year before the centennial Olympic gathering here, with ceremonies from here to Europe even as construction workers continue erecting such venues as Olympic Stadium and the Olympic aquatic centre.

"On the 19th, we make a major connection. It becomes bigger than the Atlanta Games," ACOG spokesman Dick Yarbrough said.

A major celebration will be conducted at Atlanta Stadium while on Times Square in New York, a countdown clock will begin clicking off the minutes remaining until the Games begin.

At the International Olympic Committee offices in Switzerland, officials will send invitations to 197 nations for a billion-dollar sports and cultural festival being thrown with other people's money.

Payne said 75 per cent of construction is complete for the Games and 76 per cent of the event's \$1.58 billion budget has been received.

Another \$320 million must be raised to cover staging expenses and fulfill the organisers' vow of a debt-free Games. The money will come from added sponsor and supplier agreements, a Caribbean television agreement and advance service fees for those in need of space and manpower while at the Games.

"It's an impossibility that these Games will not be a resounding success," said Payne.

Poor sales of souvenir coins and inscribed bricks for a memorial park will not force cuts in projects, Payne said, with pushes for such items continuing through the actual Games.

Ticket requests have been \$125 million more profitable than expected, bringing in \$360 million. While much of the money for duplicated requests to major events must be refunded, the interest accumulating on such funds will boost the ACOG ledgers by higher margins than anticipated.

"Our estimate of ticket requests was very conservative," Payne said. "Response has been very good and we keep getting more orders. I feel people will receive tickets they have deemed acceptable."

Every venue will receive a final run-through before the Games, with most of them coming next month at Atlanta Sports '95, a collection of 12 pre-Olympic events designed to test how well things run during multiple sports events.

While there will be no transportation or communication system functioning, events such as the Pan Pacific Swim Championships and World Freestyle Wrestling Championships should show any weak points in planning before the five-ring circus pulls into town next year.

Security's major task in the coming months will be

background checks on every ACOG staffers and volunteers, more than 70,000 people in all. That comes on top of working with law-enforcement agencies and venue directors to finalise plans for safeguarding athletes, fans and officials.

"It's going to be an awesome challenge," said Lou Arcangel, chief of Olympic preparations for the Atlanta Police Department.

Some people living in neighbourhoods near the venues fear they might be targets of terrorism, a fear enhanced by the exploding of a bomb at a federal building in Oklahoma earlier this year.

ACOG security chief Bill Ratburn, who handled security at the 1984 Olympics in Los Angeles, said Atlanta provides a more difficult challenge. But 20 years of advancements provided help as well.

"We're in much better position to provide security because of the improvements in technology," he said.

Organisers concerned with VIP no-shows

Faced with the prospect of prime seats going unused before the waxy eyes of television cameras and ticketless fans, Olympic organisers are trying to figure out how to handle VIP no-shows.

Ideally, those tickets would be surrendered to the Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games, which would then sell them to the general public. Billy Payne, the ACOG president, said doing that is not so simple.

"It's political in nature, obviously," Payne said.

ACOG is required to set aside a certain number of seats at each event for VIPs, including officials of the international federations that govern the various Olympic sports. These seats generally are among the best available and often appear in full view behind the action during televised coverage.

In past Olympics, particularly during early rounds, some officials have found something better to do than attend all the events for which they have seats.

"It appeared to the television cameras as well as the spectators: Look at all those empty seats and therefore wasted seats," Payne said.

ACOG will sell tickets at box offices during the Games and will have the capacity to print tickets on the spot.

While some sponsors have agreed to give unused tickets back to ACOG in time to resell them, Payne said doing that with the sports federations is more difficult because they tend to make their decisions at the last minute.

He said, for example, that officials of the swimming federation may have blocks of tickets to two aquatic events held at the same time.

"They logically would like to reserve the option to make the choice, even at the last minute," Payne said. "It's just difficult. Every time you take away a seat, then you are predetermining some of the decisions that they have had the discretion to make in the past."

Payne told the ACOG board he is studying how to deal with the issue but has not yet come up with a solution.

He said the International Olympic Committee and the federations are concerned about the issue and are willing to do something about it.

Belgium, Netherlands joint hosts of 2000 Euro Championship

GENEVA (AP) — Belgium and the Netherlands

were officially confirmed Friday as joint hosts of the 2000 European Championship.

The decision was ratified by UEFA's executive committee. Belgium and the Netherlands were the only candidates.

The event will run from June 7 to July 2, with the opening match to be played in Brussels on the site of the former Heysel Stadium and the final in either Rotterdam or Amsterdam.

Heysel Stadium, the site of the notorious riots at the 1985 European Champions Cup final between England's Liverpool and Italy's Juventus, has been torn down. A new stadium tentatively named King Baudouin Stadium will be opened later this year with its first game on Aug. 23 between Germany and Belgium.

"I'm very pleased," said UEFA President Lennart Johansson. "I was the one who proposed to change the regulations some eight years ago. Finally, we see the results. It is a very good

concept. The two countries are quite experienced and both have a tradition of football."

"It's the biggest sporting event we've ever had in Holland," said Dutch federation president Jeu Sprengers. "We are two small countries that have a rich history in football. We are very glad we can now show Europe and the world what we are able to do and show how we can manage a tournament in a modern way."

Sprengers said hosting the event jointly will pose certain administrative problems.

"We are two countries with different law systems and different fiscal systems," he said. "We have to clear up these problems with our governments, but we have cleared up difficulties up to this moment in a sufficient way for UEFA."

Sprengers said there should be no major logistical problems, with the furthest distance between venues being less than 300 kilometres between Amsterdam and Bruges.

The 1996 European Championship will be staged in England.

Five teams struggle to reach finals

JOHANNESBURG (AFP) — As southern Africa prepares to host the Nations' Cup for the first time, five countries from the cinderella football region are poised to play in the finals.

South Africa, hosts of the 16-team showpiece scheduled to kick off on January 13, and Zambia have qualified, and Angola, Malawi and Mozambique should join them.

While Zambia are perennial contenders, finishing runners-up twice, Malawi and Mozambique have made only one appearance each and Angola are attempting to reach the finals for the first time.

In the penultimate round of qualifying matches this weekend, Malawi host Cameroon in Group One, Zambia entertain Mauritius in Group Five and Mozambique and Angola meet in Group Six.

Victory for Malawi in Blantyre on Sunday would bring them level with leaders Zaire on seven points and virtually assure them of a place among the elite after 12-year absence.

Lesotho, who were due to host Zaire, have withdrawn from the competition because they feared the visitors could bring the Ebola virus into the tiny mountain kingdom.

Mechave Stadium in Maputo should be packed for the meeting of Mozambique and Angola, two of the few African countries where basketball rather than soccer is the national sport.

Angola top the standings with 12 points, one more than Mozambique and three ahead of the seeded nations, Guinea and Mali, whose fourth place was the surprise of the 1994 finals.

This clash of Portuguese-speaking nations brings together some of the leading cup scorers, including Fabrice Akwa Mateus, the teenage Angolan sensation who plays for Benfica in Portugal.

Mateus and Antonio 'Paulao' Alves have scored three goals each while Mozambican Nuro Tuilobode has struck four and

compatriots Chiquinho Conde and Quana Amaldo three each.

Guinea must end the unbeaten home record of Namibia to keep their chances alive while Mali should boost their goal difference with a convincing victory over whipping boys Botswana.

Goal-shy Tunisia host much-improved Senegal in a Group 2 showdown which will probably decide who joins George Weah-inspired Liberia in South Africa.

Tunisia are coached by Poland's Henri Kasperczak, who guided Ivory Coast to third place last year, but is having less success with a team that has managed just three goals in 540 minutes.

The North Africans suffered a further blow to their morale last weekend, losing a warm-up match 2-0 at French First Division club Olympique Lyon.

AFRICAN SOCCER

Graham has 'no option but to appeal'

LONDON (AFP) — George Graham is set to appeal against the 12-month ban imposed by the Football Association, according to a report Friday.

The former Arsenal manager was handed the ban after being found guilty of misconduct relating to transfer "bungs" following a three-day hearing before three FA commissioners.

He has also been ordered to pay part of the costs of the hearing and has 14 days in which to lodge an appeal.

No figure has been put on the costs but, with three barristers and seven other law-

men involved in the commission, it could exceed six figures.

According to Friday's Daily Mail, an appeal is Graham's most likely next step and he could take the matter to the High Court.

"They are giving me no option but to appeal," he is quoted as saying. "I will sit down with my solicitors in the morning to decide whether that will be to a higher FA board within the 14 days they have allowed or in the High Court for the right to pursue my trade."

Graham's counsel had made a plea for leniency at

the hearing and that was taken into account by the FA commission.

But Graham continued: "In reality, because I've been kept out of work for five months already, this is an 18-month ban."

"But the hidden damage in this sentence is financial and it is excessive. How do they expect me to meet their costs if they don't want me to work?"

"Compare this to what has happened to big clubs found guilty of serious financial irregularities and tell me whether this punishment is fair and reasonable."

GORAN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF & TANNAN HIRSCH

THOUGHTFUL DEFENSE

Both vulnerable. South deals.

NORTH

WEST

EAST

THE BIDDING

South West North East

1 NT 1 NT Pass

4 4 Pass Pass Pass

Opening lead: King of 4

We venture that few defenders

would find the winning defense on

this deal. Yet all it requires is count-

ing tricks and deduction.

With only one trump in the an-

ny suit, almost all prime cards and

few intermediates, we like West's

decision to double rather than over-

call one-no trump. South's jump to

four hearts seems reasonable—it

was unlikely to find North with little

outside the club suit. Even so, four

hearts may not be easy to defeat.

The defenders started with three

rounds of diamonds, declarer win-

ning the third. Ace of hearts and

another three West on lead and the

defender was employed.

It was tempting to try to cash the

ace of clubs, but West passed to

consider the possibilities. Declarer

surely had six hearts for the jump to

game, so North's jack of hearts was

an entry. Also, since declarer had to

have both the ace and king of spades

to go to game, a spade return would

be fatal—North's jack would win

and a fourth spade could be ruffed.

However, declarer had only eight

tricks—five trumps, a diamond and

two spades—and the defenders al-

ready had three books. One trick

therefore would do declarer little

good and West found the safest way

to assure declarer would get one

trick and no more: West returned a

low club. Dummy won, but declarer

had no way to prevent West's queen

of spades from scoring the setting

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GROHE

Serbs strike at Zepa as Chirac talks tough

SARAJEVO (Agencies) — Bosnian Serb forces began attacking a second Muslim "safe area" in Bosnia on Friday — directly challenging France's call for world action to salvage a humiliated United Nations in the Balkan crisis.

As the Serbs targeted the U.N.-declared enclave of Zepa, aid officials said thousands of Muslim refugees from the nearby town of Srebrenica were unaccounted for after 30,000 people were herded out of the town by the Bosnian Serb army.

After failing to deter the assault on Srebrenica Tuesday, North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) jets roared over Zepa Friday as Bosnian Serb forces blasted U.N. observation posts in the south of the pocket after issuing an ultimatum that U.N. peacekeepers leave and Zepa's defenders lay down their arms.

U.S. General Joutwan told the NATO Council on Friday that positions held by Ukrainian peacekeepers in the eastern Bosnian Muslim enclave of Zepa have almost all fallen, diplomats said.

Airpresence by NATO was requested by the U.N. over Zepa but no airstrikes were conducted, U.N. officials said.

Chris Gunness, a U.N. spokesman in Zagreb said the initial reports suggested that "we are seeing another U.N. safe area being overrun."

Forced out of Srebrenica by Serbs, a huge influx of exhausted, hungry refugees

overwhelmed aid workers Friday.

After the Serbs overran the U.N. "safe area" of Srebrenica this week and deported thousands of Muslim refugees, there were mounting concerns that Zepa could be next. The remote mountain town of 16,000 is just 15 kilometres southwest of Srebrenica.

If Serbs take Zepa and the nearby city of Gorazde, they would control all of eastern Bosnia, from the border of Serbia to the besieged capital of Sarajevo.

Aware of that Serb goal, government troops in Gorazde surrounded a Ukrainian peacekeepers' base, demanding back weapons they had stored there.

In Tuzla, the situation was near chaos Friday, as U.N. workers scrambled to provide tents, blankets, water and food for nearly 10,000 Muslim refugees coming from Srebrenica. Thousands more were on the road behind them.

One refugee hanged herself in the despair.

"It's a humanitarian disaster now and it will be our worst humanitarian nightmare if those other enclaves go," said Ron Redmond, a spokesman for the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees.

But those sleeping out in the open at Tuzla — all women, children and the elderly — were more fortunate than the thousands of Muslim men and boys who failed to reach the government-held town. U.N.

officials had no information on their fate.

"We are talking about thousands of missing people," said spokesman Kris Janowski. He said as many as 20,000 people may be missing.

France gave its Western allies a 48-hour deadline to join in military action to protect remaining Muslim enclaves in Bosnia from Serb attacks after the fall of Srebrenica.

Paris tried to put steel into the world's response to the capture of the U.N.'s Srebrenica "safe area" saying it would otherwise "draw the consequences."

French President Jacques Chirac, speaking at a Bastille Day news conference, condemned the response of Western allies to his call to arms to reverse the loss of Srebrenica and said it called into question the whole U.N. mission in Bosnia.

"I owe it to truth to say that up to now the contacts the French government has made have not been positive. I deplore that. For the moment we are alone," Mr. Chirac said.

He likened the world's attitude to the loss of Srebrenica to the appeasement of Nazi Germany before World War II and said France stood ready to help reinforce other eastern enclaves and break the siege of the Bosnian capital Sarajevo.

"Of course, if we want to do strictly nothing, then I don't see why U.N. forces

(Continued on page 7)

Israel to hand over 50 'infiltrators' to PLO

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — Israel will release 50 non-Palestinian Arabs jailed for entering the country illegally to the autonomous authority in the Gaza Strip, Police Minister Moshe Shapal said Friday.

He did not set a date for the handover, agreed during talks with Palestinian Cooperation Minister Nabil Shaath on the estimated 6,500 Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails.

Mr. Shapal said: "There are about 50 prisoners in our jails who entered Israel without permission."

"They have finished their sentences and we presented the possibility that the Palestinians will host them. They agreed."

He did not say which countries the group came from, but most are believed to be Iraqi or Jordanian.

There was, however, no real progress announced on the issue of Palestinian prisoners.

The Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) has demanded that a timetable be established for the release of all of them as part of an agreement under negotiation to extend autonomy across the West Bank.

"We are considering the possibility of releasing prisoners who are supporting the peace process, who didn't commit serious violent acts," Mr. Shapal told reporters.

"Probably the release will be in two instalments, one together with the signing of the agreement, the other group will be released probably a short time afterwards."

He refused to talk about numbers.

The minister said Israel

had asked the Palestinians for specific details on some prisoners who are under the age of 18, women and the sick.

"The committee will probably meet in the coming few days with the details, with the names."

Israel also asked the Palestinian National Authority to take charge of Palestinian criminals, not security prisoners, held by the Jewish state.

Mr. Shapal added they were "not to be released but to serve their jail sentences in the Palestinian Authority."

Environment Minister Yossi Sarid, who took part in the talks at a Jerusalem hotel alongside Justice Minister David Libai, said that after the release of the two groups further negotiations would be held for more releases according to the situation.

Dr. Shaath left the meeting without making any comment.

Beirut assails Israel

Lebanon accused Israel Friday of wrongfully imprisoning and torturing hundreds of its citizens and said the world community consistently turned a deaf ear to its appeals for help.

"There is a kind of weakness from international public opinion on this subject. We consider the world is not doing enough on this till now," Foreign Minister Faris Bouez said.

He told a news conference Israel was holding more than 300 Lebanese prisoners in what he called illegal camps. "These are not military people. They are civilian people... it is a very clear kidnapping of civilians," Mr. Bouez said.

France emerges as Iran's top oil partner

TEHRAN (AFP) — France has emerged as Iran's top oil partner after the French company Total won a \$600 million contract to develop two offshore fields in the Gulf, diplomats said Friday.

Total signalled its commitment to Iran after signing a deal on Thursday to develop the Sirri A and Sirri E fields, replacing the U.S. firm Conoco, forced to pull out of an identical deal following a trade ban imposed by Washington.

The deal was the first Iran has signed with the foreign company in the sensitive oil field since the 1979 revolution. The Islamic republic has until now refused to share oil production with foreign companies.

"This project demonstrates France's will to develop relations with Iran and pave the way for new projects to reconstruct and modernise the Iranian oil industry," a Euro-

pean diplomat said in Tehran.

The deal was seen by diplomats as a political and economic triumph for Iran, which has lobbied to attract investment from other countries to replace business lost with the United States.

President Bill Clinton has tried without success to persuade his Western allies to join the trade embargo he slapped on Iran on June 6, alleging Tehran supported terrorism and was seeking to develop nuclear weapons.

After France's refusal to join the embargo, the government in Tehran voiced its desire on several occasions to boost trade with Paris because of its "independent policy" and advanced technology.

Deputy Foreign Minister Mahmoud Vaezi said France could be a main beneficiary of Iran's trade with other countries in the coming year.

Yeltsin's hospital stay is extended

MOSCOW (AFP) — Doctors have told Russian President Boris Yeltsin to remain in hospital another week, an aide said Friday in a surprise announcement raising new fears over the seriousness of his heart condition.

"The doctors want the president to continue his treatment in hospital," said presidential spokesman Sergei Medvedev, cited by Interfax news agency.

Another aide, Viktor Ilyushin, cited by ITAR-TASS, said Mr. Yeltsin's scheduled engagements from July 16 to 23 have been cancelled, including a trip to Norway and a meeting with political party leaders.

An aide had earlier this week reported Mr. Yeltsin might leave hospital Monday, July 17, after he was suddenly taken ill Tuesday with an ischaemia, a disease involving insufficient blood flow into an organ and which can bring on a heart attack.

Earlier Friday, a Kremlin spokesman had said he was "doing well" and that his planned visit to Norway on Wednesday and the northern Russian city of Murmansk was still on schedule.

Fears over the 64-year-old president's health were fuelled by the news that his engagements were being cancelled, because up to then the Kremlin had given the impression it was business as usual (see inside).

Mr. Yeltsin's office said he continued to run the country from his bed, sending proposed laws to parliament and fixing Dec. 17 as the date of legislative elections.

When Conoco pulled out, the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) entered into negotiations with several foreign firms, including Royal Dutch Shell and Total.

Although Shell was tipped to win the contract, the company bowed out at the last minute for economic and commercial considerations.

Sirri E is estimated to have recoverable reserves of 436 million barrels and the other field, Sirri A 50 million barrels.

The two fields are located near Sirri C and D, where the NIOC is presently conducting operations and has terminals for storage and evacuation.

Iran, facing a severe financial crisis including a foreign debt of around \$35 billion, hopes to earn some \$12.5 billion from oil and \$750 million from gas extracted from the fields, oil industry sources said.



CROWN PRINCE MEETS EVANS: His Royal Highness Prince Hassan holds talks with Australian Foreign Minister Gareth Evans (centre) in Amman on Friday in a meeting attended by Foreign Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti (see story on page one) (Petra photo)

CBJ governor says criticism of Petra Bank liquidation unjustified

By P.V. Vivekanand
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ) Governor Mohammad Nabulsi on Friday described as unfounded and unsubstantiated the allegations made in the Lower House of Parliament against the multi-million dinar liquidation of Petra Bank.

Dr. Nabulsi said the books of accounts of the government-appointed liquidation committee were open for inspection and that every action undertaken by the panel was very much within the mandate given to it by the government and in accordance to decisions taken by the board of governors of the Central Bank.

Petra Bank was once Jordan's second largest commercial bank after the Arab Bank. In July 1989, the Economic Security Committee of the government took over Petra Bank after gross irregularities surfaced and the bank defaulted on its obligations to the Central Bank.

Subsequently, Petra Bank founder and general manager Ahmad Chalabi fled the country, and a government-appointed management committee ran the bank for some months before it found that the immensity of the problems made it impossible for the bank to continue despite more than JD 200 million pumped in by the Central Bank to protect the interests of depositors.

The 220,000 shares were sold at JD 15 each while the prevailing price for the stock at the Amman Financial Market (AFM) at the time was

around JD 14.5. The sale was conducted in public, and the only reason the Central Bank did not approve an open auction sale was concern over the impact of such a deal on the overall price of the shares of the Cairo Amman Bank, he said.

One month after the sale was made in 1991, the market price of Cairo Amman Bank shares at the AMF ranged between JD 14.25 and JD 16.

Dr. Nabulsi said a 25 per cent discount the liquidation committee offered to debtors for prompt payment of the dues was applied uniformly and rejected a charge that the move had favoured the wealthy.

The rebate was offered evenly to thousands of Petra Bank debtors and was not limited to a few, he said. The offer, which resulted in the collection of JD 36 million in



Mohammad Nabulsi

around JD 14.5. The sale was conducted in public, and the only reason the Central Bank did not approve an open auction sale was concern over the impact of such a deal on the overall price of the shares of the Cairo Amman Bank, he said.

One month after the sale was made in 1991, the market price of Cairo Amman Bank shares at the AMF ranged between JD 14.25 and JD 16.

Dr. Nabulsi said a 25 per cent discount the liquidation committee offered to debtors for prompt payment of the dues was applied uniformly and rejected a charge that the move had favoured the wealthy.

The rebate was offered evenly to thousands of Petra Bank debtors and was not limited to a few, he said. The offer, which resulted in the collection of JD 36 million in

doubtful debts collected in less than three months, still stands, he said.

"All the transactions and deals conducted by the liquidation committee are open for public inspection," he reiterated.

Specifically in response to a charge that the offer had benefited Cairo Amman Bank, the CBJ governor said experts had conducted a thorough study of the situation of the debtor. The offer led to the collection of JD 12 million from Cairo Amman Bank, he said.

Offering an incentive to the debtors helped the realisation of many bad debts which would otherwise have to be written off as bad debts or led to complicated legal wrangles, he said.

"If anything, the incentives help debtors who are unable to settle their dues immediately rather than who have enough funds to pay the debts," Dr. Nabulsi affirmed.

Referring to another charge, the JD 11 million expense of the liquidation committee, the CBJ governor said the amount represented five years of expenses rather than one year as charged.

He said that 42 per cent of the expenses represented the salaries and wages of the liquidation committee, which has been working since July 1990. The committee employs 70 staff.

Another 26 per cent represented litigation charges, he

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Chirac: Decision to resume tests is final

PARIS (AFP) — President Jacques Chirac, shrugging off worldwide Bastille Day protests over French nuclear tests, said Friday his decision to resume the blasts in the South Pacific was "irreversible."

As environmentalists marched and protested across the globe, marring French national day ceremonies worldwide, France staged its annual Bastille Day display of military might along the Champs Elysees with barely an anti-nuclear incident occurring in the capital.

Addressing a nationally televised press conference on his first Bastille Day appearance as president of France, Mr. Chirac said: "The decision to resume the tests is of course irrevocable."

He said scientists were "unanimous" that underground testing on the Mururoa atoll in French Polynesia would cause "strictly no pollution."

Responding to anti-nuclear protests, notably by Australia and New Zealand, Mr. Chirac said: "I can understand the emotion, when there are no ulterior motives, even though I do not share it."

French police laid on extra security to prevent possible disruption here, but there was only a minor protest by a 50-strong group of Trotskyists who were in the crowd watching the traditional parade along one of the world's largest avenues.

Big demonstrations and boycotts were staged in the Pacific in particular as French embassies laid on traditional Bastille Day receptions, but

protests were also to be held in Europe, particularly in Germany and Italy where anti-nuclear test feeling is strongest.

In Paris, Mr. Chirac, presiding over his first Bastille Day since he was elected in May, watched as Foreign Legion troops and marines who have seen service in former Yugoslavia marched down the Champs-Elysees. A total of 175 planes and helicopters, including seven Mirage F1 fighter bombers, overflew the free-lined thoroughfare in central Paris.

About 50 Trotskyists who were in the crowd watching the parade waved banners and shouted slogans against nuclear tests. But the large police force present moved in immediately and arrested the protesters, from Alain Krivine's Revolutionary Communist League (LRC).

A pair of English tourists politely waved a banner reading "Stop Nuclear Tests" and were taken to a police station for allegedly causing an obstruction.

To try to stop protests, Paris police implemented extra traffic restrictions in the capital for the parade, as well as for a fireworks display Friday night at the Eiffel Tower, which normally attracts huge crowds.

At his press conference, Mr. Chirac, who announced last month he would break a three-year moratorium on nuclear tests decided by former President Francois Mitterrand, denied that France was setting "a bad example" to would-be nuclear powers.

Egypt restates claim to Halaib to U.N.

CAIRO (Agencies) — Egypt has set out to the United Nations Security Council its claim to sovereignty over a border area disputed with neighbouring Sudan, Egyptian newspapers reported Friday.

Cairo described Khartoum's claim to the Red Sea border area of Halaib as "unfounded" in a message sent to the U.N., the newspapers said.

Egypt has rejected Sudan's insistence that the 17,000-square-kilometres triangle was handed over when their border was amended in 1902 and 1907.

"Egypt's sovereignty over all the territories situated north of the 22nd Parallel is historically and legally proven even before Sudanese independence in 1956 and up to the present," Foreign Minister Amr Musa said.

Cairo insists the region, subject of an increasingly bitter war of words between the countries over the last few weeks, was awarded to Egypt under an 1899 treaty signed by Britain and Egypt when both countries controlled Sudan.

Mr. Musa said he had acted after two letters sent by his Sudanese counterpart Ali Osman Taha to the Security Council which he said "contained multiple misrepresentations."

Sudanese President Omar Hassan Al Bashir, addressing a rally Thursday, said more than 100,000 troops were standing by to defend Halaib and the nation against "colonialist aggression."

Relations between the two

countries have deteriorated since Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak implicated Sudan in an attempt to kill him in Addis Ababa on June 26, a charge denied by Khartoum.

Sudan complained to the U.N. in early July after a series of border clashes in Halaib.

Egyptian newspapers also said Friday Egypt is to invest 200 million pounds (\$59 million) in the Halaib region.

They quoted a government minister as saying the investments would cover projects in agricultural, tourism, mining and fishing sectors and other urgent local needs.

Al Halam newspaper quoted Mohammad Ibrahim Suliman, minister of state for new development communities, as saying part of the funds would go to building 1,000 new houses in the three main towns of Halaib and air and sea ports.

Gen. Bashir, addressing a rally in the east of the country, said Egypt had cut off the water supplies to civilians in the Halaib area in a "mean and futile move to subjugate the citizens of Halaib."

"A message for those who kneel before the Americans and the Zionists, Sudan will never be frightened by the provocations and the colonialist plans whatever by the pressure," he said.

Gen. Bashir urged all Sudanese to go to the training camps to "defend the nation and the faith."

He said Halaib was 100 per cent Sudanese and Sudan would never "surrender an inch of its territory."

COLUMN

FDA says nicotine is a drug

WASHINGTON (AFP) — The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has concluded for the first time that nicotine is a drug, opening the way for stricter regulations aimed at protecting minors. Although the FDA has broad authority to regulate drugs, it has left it to the White House to decide what to do about its finding that nicotine is addictive. The New York Times and The Wall Street Journal said President Bill Clinton demurred Thursday, saying it would be "somewhat premature" to say he is considering whether to regulate nicotine as a drug. "My concern is... the impact of cigarette smoking, particularly, on our young people and the fact that cigarette smoking seems to be going up among our young people and certainly among certain groups of them," he said. FDA and White House officials met Wednesday and were scheduled to meet again later, said White House spokesman Michael McCurry. "I think we ought to do more about that (smoking among youth) than is being done and I'm willing to do that, but I want to see exactly what their recommendations are," Mr. Clinton told reporters.

World's 'oldest footprint' found in Australia

PERTH, Australia (R) — Australian and British scientists have found what they say are the world's oldest ever footprints in ancient rock in west Australia, upsetting classic evolutionary theory that plants were Earth's first colonisers. The footprints, made by giant one-metre (three-ft) long scorpions and centipedes, were dated to at least 420 million years ago, well before the first higher plants took root, Australian palaeontologist Ken McNamara said Thursday. "It's changing the sequence of events," Mr. McNamara, of the Western Australia Museum in Perth, told Reuters. "The classic view of evolution of life on land is not really held up in the fossil evidence," he added. The fossil record of these huge, scuttling arthropods is the earliest evidence of an animal walking on land, he said, adding they were found in a gully in a national park about 60 kilometres north of Perth. "We are looking at rocks of about 420 to 430 million years ago, but they could be older than that," Mr. McNamara said. "They were big scorpion-type animals and big centipede-type animals."

Fujimori files for divorce

LIMA (AFP) — Capping a presidential palace soap opera that has gripped Peruvians for nearly a year, President Alberto Fujimori confirmed Thursday that he had filed for divorce citing "grave insult" as grounds. "With great sadness, for his four children, he filed a request for divorce with the courts to have his marriage to his wife Susana Higuchi dissolved," the president's office said in a statement. Mr. Fujimori, 57, acknowledged that his divorce petition, in which he charges his wife committed "grave insult," had been filed on June 9. Ms. Higuchi legally has 30 days from the filing date to respond to the request. Ms. Higuchi recently told the news magazine Caras that "if anyone is uneasy, it is the president. I have thought about it, and I have made a decision, but I will only make it known when I said to do so officially."

The couple, both offspring of Japanese immigrants, saw their marriage hit the skids Aug. 3, 1994 when Higuchi publicly criticised a law passed by lawmakers loyal to the president that banned her from running for the presidency or seeking a Senate seat. She then moved out of the presidential palace, moved in with family friends and began charging members of her husband's cabinet with corruption. On August 23, 1994, the president stripped his wife of her title and duties as first lady. The couple has four children, and Mr. Fujimori has named their daughter Keiko Sofia the replacement public "first lady."

127 suspect — Police in the city of eight police stations. The arrest was made. The sources said. The Interior Ministry officials confirmed the number of arrests on government websites. The number of arrests was given for those who are dozens or possibly

King phones Moroccan leader

AMMAN (J.T.) — King Hussein of Jordan on Friday evening telephoned Hassan II of Morocco to discuss the deteriorating situation in the light of the recent attacks by Serb forces on Bosnia. The King said that a number of measures should be taken by the world community to stop this tragedy and any effort to end the war in the Balkans. He said Jordan will join the efforts of other regional and international organisations to bring about a peaceful settlement to the conflict. The two monarchs agreed to maintain contacts over the course of the conflict.

Swaziland invades King and Queen

AMMAN (P.T.) — King Hussein of Jordan received a letter from the Swaziland monarch Delamini, who visited the King at the Jordanian Palace. King Hussein voiced his support for the Swaziland monarch's efforts to bring about a peaceful settlement to the conflict.

Austria backs Palestinian rights

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AP) — A senior Austrian official visited the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) office in Amman Saturday to support the Palestinian cause. The official said that Austria supports the Palestinian struggle for self-determination and the right to a state.

France holds talks in Syria

DAMASCUS (AP) — French Foreign Minister Jean-Marie Godeaux met Syrian President Hafez Assad on Saturday to discuss the peace process in the Middle East. The two leaders discussed the situation in the region and the role of France in promoting peace.

Iraq restoring damaged 'copters'

BAGHDAD (AFP) — Iraq has begun to repair damaged helicopters damaged during the conflict with Iran after the end of the war. The Iraqi government said it was working to restore the helicopters to operational status as soon as possible.